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TOM BIERBAUM
WHEN THEY HATE YOUR COMIC!

AARON HUBRICH
DIGITAL COLORS: BACKGROUNDS ON BACKGROUNDS

PAT LEE
TRANSFORMERS • DREAMWAVE
I N T E R V I E W

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER...

Ambassadors...

This has been a great ride, and I can't believe we are producing our eighteenth issue and putting the wraps on three years of Sketch Magazine.

Over the last year we've been blessed with some of the most talented creators out there on our covers and offering their tips and insights between our pages, beginning with the talented painter David Michael Beck and finishing with current superstar Pat Lee. Oh yeah, and our other issues were filled with a wide range of stylists as diverse as J. Scott Campbell, Neil Gaiman, Jan Duursema and Ron Garney.

The coming year looks no different; we start our fourth year of Sketch interviews with superstars Alan Moore, J. Michael Straczynski, Jim Lee, and Alex Ross. As you can see, the Sketch crew isn't pulling any punches; we are asking the best in the business how they produce their top selling comic books.

As our third year of publication comes to a close, we've found many of our early issues are almost sold out. With this in mind, and realizing that the information in *Sketch* never dates, we have created *The Best of Sketch Magazine* Vol. 1. This 180-page magazine will include interviews and articles from our earlier sold out issues, as well as bringing you a new interview with Fathom creator Michael Turner.

A "project that is always in-the-works" is how I recently described *Sketch* magazine to a peer in the comic industry. With that in mind, next year we plan to make some changes in our content, adding more tech info columns and reviews on products, and examining new releases of art books and supplies that will help you as a comic creator.

In its fourth year, *Sketch* will continue to embody its reputation as *the* comic book industry's trade publication.

I encourage you to send letters or email with your comic book experiences and tips to our letters page to share with your fellow readers. As creators I want to encourage our communal activity in the world of comics, and *Sketch* is a great place to share your voice.

As comics get more recognition and continue to expand into libraries, I ask you to be an ambassador for our industry. We need enthusiastic representatives to share their knowledge, and help to expand the word about comics.

Take this as a personal challenge.

take care,
Bob

inside

the feature

Grating Expectorations

Transformers! *G.I. Joe*! He-Man and the *Masters of the Universe*! Just the tip of the retro strain of excitement infusing itself into the main body of the comic-book marketplace with some healthy results, one of the largest waves of licensed titles to ride the shelves since the racks held everything from *Sectaurs* to *Dino-Riders*. Many of the retro books sport great imagery by high-end talent such as Arthur Adams, J. Scott Campbell and Alex Ross, making them worth grabbing up for their covers alone.

Popping into the midst of arguably some of the nicest comic work in years – much of it adult in nature, such as *100 Bullets*, Bruce Jones' *Hulk*, *Powers*, or Mark Millar's work, just to name a few – this fairly innocent material presents some interesting questions to creative hands both established and entry level if considering retro work. Quality mature titles aside, after arcs of bulging bad girls, hyper violence both satirical and serious, and plenty of current "adult" books that seem to rely on only four keys of the keypad to add their grit and supposed maturity and interest, are market tastes opening to another flavor? Rather than another profanity laden but plot light attempt at a new crime book in hopes of capturing the college crowd, is it easier to kick up the vitrified bones of past, and for the most part more innocent, enjoyments? Is it better? No matter, if you're thinking of jumping on the retro wagon as a creative hand you have options to mull over as you would any new project.

Will you handle these licensed properties in a fashion true to their fairly innocuous form (remember, we're talking about things like *Ultraman*, not *Urotsukidoji*)? Will you flesh them out and give them far greater depth and complex back story than their original character matrix, and if so, how far will you go? Will you deconstruct them, making them more "cutting edge" and modern for the current readership?

Artistically, do you think your individual style appropriate for the particular property, as well for the target company and editor's eye for commercial appeal and success? Or could you tweak yourself to a more manga-ized look? Very popular, and much of the material look is of the family of *Starblazers*, *Robotech*, and other anime. Perhaps you'll consider a more radical change by trying to cop a Timm, Mignola, or other sharp, successful, and influential stylist. A number of pencilers do – it's a commercial business, and an editor may often prefer the feel of a proven hitter to a more singular look.

Is one of the keys to doing good retro understanding why we're so drawn to our memories? What's that nice feel good greeting card line: "We don't stop playing because we get old; we get old because we stop playing." Fun should certainly play a part in our particular line of work, so substitute "create" for "play" in that one and apply it to our community. Of course, there's also the line from the great Samuel Peckinpah classic *The Wild Bunch*: "We all dream of being a child again, even the worst of us – perhaps the worst most of all." Over the years I've been accused of embodying these qualities – both childish and being the worst of humanity – to the max and on all levels, from personal situations to credit qualifications.

While hoping you're on the side of the angels, we all have our favorite characters that impressed us in our formative stages; shows, comics, and toys that filled the nascent creator within us with excitement and enjoyment so impactful that we've chosen to continue recreating the experience for ourselves and others... as illustrators and storytellers from comics to game designers, for profit and for personal fulfillment. And who doesn't like and learn from other creators' renditions of our favorite kizin or character from our past? I'd love to see one of the previously mentioned artists' takes on The Herculoids, or my favorite all-time toy; Horrible Hamilton of Remco's great Hamilton's Invaders – the latter a terrific 3-D embodiment of Wally Wood, Reynold Brown, and Frank McCarthy spectacle to this young pencil-pusher, hunched over a dinosaur issue of *Star Spangled War Stories*. What are your favorites, and how do you think your creative influences would interpret them?

Just remember that for all the fun, comics are still a commercial enterprise, so business first: do your research, consider your options, and choose your artistic approach as wisely as possible – then, merge your reminiscing and dreams to your talent, and work to bring it all to life! Along with your memories, *Sketch* hopes to provide you with additional inspiration and enthusiasm for you to work with, as well as information to help you refine your creative energy and impulses. Most importantly, let's hope our efforts attract the eyes and garner the attention of many beyond our current audience, allowing a new and far larger generation of readers to enjoy some comic-book nostalgia of their own in the near future.

We all get old...as Grandpa Simpson warns, "Someday, it'll happen to you!" Here's to making creative memories for another generation, and someday becoming part of its fond retro memories. But start putting your vision on bristol or your computer now...*today* is your day! Now, "Back in my day"...

Keep *Sketch*ing,
Flint

Comic books are a **fun medium!** Blue Line Productions' goals are aimed toward enhancing this art form - and others – through knowledge and quality art supplies. We try hard to make certain that you, the reader, have the comic book technique information you require for your personal enjoyment of this great field.

> IF MEGATRON IS BACK THEN I NEED TO CALL ON SOME *OLD FRIENDS* FOR HELP.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE!

Pat Lee on his transformation from artist to studio head to publishing magnate!

an interview conducted by Bill Baker

Just under a decade ago, a fresh-faced Canadian barely out of high school named Pat Lee grabbed the attention of readers with his work on *Prophet* and *Bloodpool*. Soon after, he reinvented himself and became the head of his own studio, Dreamwave, which produced a series of popular books including the sci-fi crime drama *Dark Minds*, and *Warlands*, a fantasy epic. Not content with that level of success, Lee and company left the relatively secure environs of Image central and morphed yet again, emerging this time as an idea factory and a publisher.

While some industry wags questioned the wisdom of this bold move, the undeniable success of the first book, *Transformers*, from the newly-re-imagined company not only silenced all doubting Thomases, but also heralded the literal tsunami of "nostalgia" titles from various publishers that are currently flooding the marketplace. Poised on a huge crest of interest in their work, Dreamwave is about to unleash a full line of books - each one personally overseen by Lee himself - which cover an astonishingly wide range of genres, interests, and styles. In spite of a truly crazy schedule, Lee recently took a short break from his innumerable duties running Dreamwave to talk about his rise from studio worker to ruler of his own magic kingdom, reminisce about the folks who helped him along the way and the impact they've had on his work and general business philosophies, as well as reveal the secret of how he manages to create twenty-two pages of dynamic art each and every month despite the many demands of his new role.

Autobots Cover of TRANSFORMERS #1

Sketch: Pat, how did you get interested in doing comic books in the first place?

Pat Lee: Comic books pretty much started off with me collecting some Japanese anime videos. I also had a lot of friends who were interested in comics who kind of pulled me in. I didn't have any money at the time, so I was collecting from the twenty-five cent bins. I collected titles like *[The Fabulous Furry] Freak Brothers* to begin with, stuff that I could afford. [General laughter] And then, as I started working at my parents' grocery stores I had enough money to take up dollar comic books, so I started collecting *Amazing Spider-Man* and all kinds of different types of comic books.

But really, I got into comics more as something that was just a hobby of collecting. I wouldn't read all the comic books but I would collect them because it was just a cool thing to do at the time, and all my friends were collecting, too. It was cool to say, "Oh, I've got *Amazing Spider-Man*

issue so-and-so!" So I had a lot of friends that were involved with comics, and got involved with comics through my friends.

Sketch: Were you drawing at this time?

Pat: Yes, definitely. At that time I was already drawing, but I was doing a lot of different kinds of art. But then comics brought me into this flavor, and got me interested. Just looking at all the different kinds of comic book material, it got me more interested in that realm because I was into cartoons. Ever since I was watching *Transformers* or other cartoons, I kind of felt it was more suited to what I wanted to do. Not just as a profession, but artistically it seemed more suited to my style. And I kind of developed it from there, got into comic books and felt that the medium was pretty cool. So I just started drawing, and started copying different styles from comic books.

Sketch: At that point, were you literally tracing the art to learn how to do it?

Pat: Not tracing it but I guess copying it, and trying to learn how they structured their poses, and how they'd do the paneling. At that age I couldn't really understand comic books from an artistic level, so I was just trying to take the artistic styles that were already there and trying to get a grasp of how they do it, the different shots that the artists' chose, and trying to figure out why they chose to use those shots.

Sketch: Where there any specific artists whose work was particularly interesting or helpful to you at that point?

Pat: I think the guys that I was digging the most were the original Image guys. I was just looking at Marc Silvestri and Jim Lee. I like Jae Lee's stuff a lot, because it was very different. It had this more realistic feel and a lot of blacks being dropped in, which I found really fascinating, like you'd see in

the work of Mike Mignola.

During the time when I was collecting comics, Image had just formed. Well, that was when I'd just started really getting into drawing comics, was when Image formed. But before that, I was doing Wolverine covers just for fun. Still, I would say that my biggest influence is Simon Bisley on *Slaine*. And, of course, Japanese anime was a huge influence on me. And I really enjoyed Jim Lee's work just because he had a very unique style, and everything was very proportional, and I just really enjoyed his paneling and his directing.

Sketch: What was it about Bisley's work that you liked?

Pat: I think Bisley just has this incredible understanding of color theory, and he really understands how to use oils, and he understands mood. I just love the chaos he portrays in his artwork, along with the combination of fantasy. It's like a really great combination, his painting. It showed a lot of realism, but it also had a lot of dynamics in it as well.

Sketch: Would that whole aspect of dynamics be one of the reasons for your love of anime?

Pat: Definitely. I love the dynamics that anime brings to the table, but I also like the realism that it also portrays with simple linear artwork. You know, anime is often looked at as a bouncy kind of style, but when I think of anime I think of a great way to tell a story. It's a great way of telling a unique story, and a way to portray a conceptual idea that has different mixed mediums. If you're telling a futuristic story like *Armitage*, or *Ghost in the Shell*, or *Akira*, there's a lot of realism in the story and the character development, and it really makes stories like *Akira* — futuristic stories, or fantasy stories — believable. And the way they animate some of the characters, sometimes it just has so much human quality to it, which I think is a great way of portraying different story lines.

Stories like *Akira* are just phenomenal, and they just create so much mood and characterization in the movie. And the color schematics and the fluidity of the animation just totally make everything real. I'm really into that. I'm not really into anime just for the bounciness and the big eyes, and stuff like that. I'm more into the anime that has a lot of flavor, that portrays a reality with a mixed medium of a fantasy or futurism.

Sketch: Yeah, that realism coupled with believable human characters really gives it a spine that helps you relate to everything that's going on.

Pat: Right.

Sketch: Let's talk a bit about your training. Did you have much formal training in the classroom, or would you consider yourself basically self-taught?

Pat: I think I'm pretty much self-taught. I didn't really go to school for art. It was a gradual collection of sitting at my art table and just drawing consistently as each year passed by, and learning a lot from books. When I see things...

Sometimes when I'm eating dinner people ask, "What are you staring at?" or, "What are you thinking of?" and my mind is like turning at 180 miles an hour. I'm just constantly thinking of conceptual ideas, like how I can use this color with this color. When I look at things, I don't look at things like, "Oh, it's a desk." I look at the length of the desk, what color it is, why they developed the desk to look the way it does. And just from my experiences, and things that I look at and how I look at things; each object and everything differently, a culmination of that helps me with my art, as well. So I never really went to any school, other than just learning from high school. My experiences mainly come from being a professional artist, and learning through other professionals, from them teaching me how to utilize my skills to their best.

Sketch: How did you get to that point? I'm interested in hearing the specifics of how these professionals helped you and what you learned from them, but how did you get to the point that you could enter that world in the first place?

Pat: Pretty much I was into comics after high school, and my brother and my sister were so busy with school, and I wanted to make some money for my family. So I thought probably the best way to do that was to look for a job after high school. My parents gave me some time to find an opportunity or, if I didn't find a job by then, to go back to school. Which I had no problem with. So I'm kind of glad that my parents gave me an opportunity to look for a job in comics.

I had a lot of people in high school, including some of my teachers, who were pushing me, saying, "What are you doing in school?" I had one religion teacher and one art teacher that were really pushing me and gearing me towards professional comic book illustration. And I felt that whether I made money or whether I didn't make money, it was more for the love of comics, since I've always been into it.

I went to so many different conventions, and I got shot down every single time. I got shot down by all the big publishing companies, and I got shot down by even the smaller studios. Finally, after quite a long time, I met Dan Fraga at a Toronto comic convention. He was interested in looking at

my stuff, and he asked me to meet him up at a comic book store the following day. So I went up to the comic book shop; he was doing a signing there, and I showed him my portfolio once again gave him copies of my work which he took back to Extreme Studios, which was owned by Rob Liefeld. And then one day Dan Fraga called me up and asked me if I was interested in doing a five page insert on *Black Flag*. So I did that. It wasn't like a pay thing; it was like a test shot. And then I was also asked to do a couple pin ups here and there.

Finally, I guess Rob Liefeld was interested enough to fly me over to California. So pretty much I packed up my gear and flew out to California and did some pretty hefty training. Part of that training was with Danny Miki, Stephen Platt, and Jonathan Sibal, who were all great friends of mine. And they really helped me out in all the different aspects of making comics. Oh, and you got Liquid, which was Christian Lichtner and Aaron, who at the time weren't formed into Liquid yet. They taught me a lot about colors and color theory. It was just great to learn from all these different angles and different aspects. And that just pushed me more into learning to be a comic book illustrator. And not only to be a comic book illustrator, but being an artist in general. From there I learned Photoshop - I learned that on my own - and picked up inking. I was told by a former ex-boss ...

I remember one time I inked a page and I was told not to ink pages again, because it looked so bad. I got so upset about that, because it was my first attempt at it, and that individual could have told me in a different manner, in a different tone. So I was really upset about it, and that, in a way, drove me to become a better inker. So I practiced and practiced and practiced until I got the hang of it. And learning from

Danny Miki, and Jonathan Sibal, and Marlo Alquiza; they really helped me understand the philosophy behind inking, and the technique behind it. And I think it was a lot of my determination in trying to understand the philosophy behind being a penciler, and being an inker, and being a colorist. I wanted to learn every aspect. When I was eighteen I wanted to learn how the business was run, how books were distributed, the art process, the administration side, editorial. I wanted to learn all aspects of it.

I kind of wanted to open my up own company ever since I was seventeen, or even younger, and I really wanted to learn all aspects of it. So every job that I've had I would study the business as a whole, not just my position. And so that kind of brought me to Dreamwave.

Sketch: Why did you want to own your own company? Was it mainly for the freedom it would offer you?

Pat: It was for many reasons. I think one of the biggest things was freedom. When I used to work with other companies I would always ask to change something, and it would never be done. I would always ask to have a different inker, or a different colorist, or to do touch ups of some sort; it would just never be followed through. And it's no one's fault for that. I mean, I understand the procedure and how it works. Sometimes things can't be changed, and you just have to accept that that's the way it is. I felt that by having my own studio I would be able to have full control on my art, and full control on how I wanted certain books to look. It seems that we've been able to pull it off pretty well.

I just felt that I had a good understanding of my perception of how I wanted to see comics drawn. Often I would be told, "Oh, don't draw manga style," or, "Don't draw Japanese style on American bodies," or don't do this, don't do that, and I was just really tired of others trying to force my own style to become something that I didn't want to do. So I felt that, in order to gain that freedom, the best thing to do was to produce my own comic book under my own company. It took a while to actually do that. Because you have to go through certain steps. You have to build a name. You can't just jump right into it, and it takes a lot of time and a lot of patience. A lot of patience. If you don't have a good, solid team, one member could, potentially, affect you in terms of not wanting to do the project at all, or the final product not looking the way you want it to look. You definitely do have to have the right team. So now I have very specific artists I will work with. I won't work with just any colorist. There are certain colorists that I work with that I've trained, and have a style that I feel comfortable with. And I think that's so key for an artist if you want something to look the way you want it to. If you're looking from a director's point of view it needs to be very precise in order to create your vision. So there were many times that I had to color my own stuff, ink my own stuff and pencil it, because I felt that I was the only one that had envisioned what I saw in my head. And

Decepticon Cover of TRANSFORMERS #1

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it's no one's fault, it's just I had a specific way of doing things. And with that came all the aggravations, because I'd have to color and ink and pencil my own stuff. If you look at *Warlands: Age of Ice* issue one, I colored something like 85% of that comic book. Not only that, but I had to pencil it, and I also had to ink a few pages as well. So in many ways I could lean towards a lesser quality of my personal work, but I am a perfectionist.

But I also understand the business. The business is ... well, yes, sometimes it's cruel from an artist's perspective. Because when a book has to go out, it has to go out. And I totally understand the business aspect of it. So what we'll do is, we'll try to produce the best quality we can with the time that we do have. And as long as I do the best that I can, then that's the most important element. I mean, I could do nine pages a day if I wanted to, but they're not going to look that great. But I'll do the best that I can, if it has to go out the next day. So it's very difficult for an artist to understand the business side of it. It really is.

I can't say that I'm a businessman. And I don't believe that I am. I try to be, but I don't think that I'm a businessman. Essentially, I'm an artist first before I'm a businessman, and sometimes it's very difficult for other artists to understand the business of it all. Because it'd be like, "If you want to get it out, then I'll hack it out. But if you want me to do a good job, then it's going to take a lot of time." Well, where's the balance in that? Where's the middle ground? And it's so difficult to find that middle ground. That's why, sometimes, administration and artists don't get along, because they don't understand each other. You know, one says, "This is the deadline, it has to get done now." And artists are like, "Well, if you want good quality, then you're going to have to push the deadline." Sometimes there's a lot of conflict between that, but I'm kind of getting off the topic of conversation. [Laughter.]

Sketch: Well, it really is at the heart of things in so many different ways. We're dealing with a business that's based on the monthly periodical. Making that deadline while also keeping the quality up to snuff, especially these days, is vitally important.

Pat: Yep. And I think what a lot of artists don't realize is that it is a business. And, as much as there is a love for comics, and there is a love for doing great work, sometimes it gets really frustrating when you go, "Hey, check this out. I finished this many pages," and the administration side answers with, "Okay. When are you going to give me more?" It just seems to pop out of nowhere. And it's hard, as an artist, to accept that. It's hard for an artist to say, "Okay. I

Pencil drawing from Dreamwave's WARLANDS series.

just showed you that I can do four pages in one day, and you want more?" But the administrative team, they look at it from a business standpoint. They don't look at the hardship, and how hard it was to pummel out these four pages in that day. So sometimes you have to forgive the administration team for thinking that way, because they're not you, and you have to understand that. But a lot of artists don't under-

stand that.

Again, it's very hard for artists and the administrative team to get along sometimes. Even for me. Sometimes I'll have my production managers say - even though I own the company...I have a guy named Ted Pun, who is our new Project Manager, and sometimes he'll really push me and drive me. Like, "Pat, when are you going to get these frickin' pages done that I need?" And I un-

derstand it, but sometimes it gets really frustrating because I'm like, "Well, I just finished checking two hundred and fifty emails, and I had to do this and this and..." And sometimes I just want to say, "Come on, man. I'm the freakin' President!" [General laughter] But then I think, "Calm down, calm down," to myself. I mean, that's his job, you know?

Sometimes my artist behavior goes on berserk mode, and I have to yell. But, most of the time, I understand the importance of getting this book completed and out there monthly. And then, with *Transformers*, it was late because I had all these conventions. There's so many hidden things that the public doesn't see. I wish that there was another one of me, that way I can be here signing comic books or what ever, and that Pat Lee is on the drawing table, drawing 24-7. Unfortunately it's not like that, and I have to attend some conventions, and I have to attend signings, and I have a lot of busi-

ness negotiations that I have to do, and I have to be at different places at different times ...which doesn't always allow me to get to the drawing board. So with that comes the potential of delays on the comic books that I work on.

I think it was very important that, at least for the first couple of months of *Transformers*, that I was out there doing signings and talking to people about Dreamwave Productions. Because it was literally the spark of Dreamwave Productions moving from a studio to a publishing company, so I really had to be out there to show people all the different titles we're doing. It was important for me to be out there. But right now the first series is completed, so I don't have to worry so much.

Sketch: What steps are you taking to avoid delays in the future?
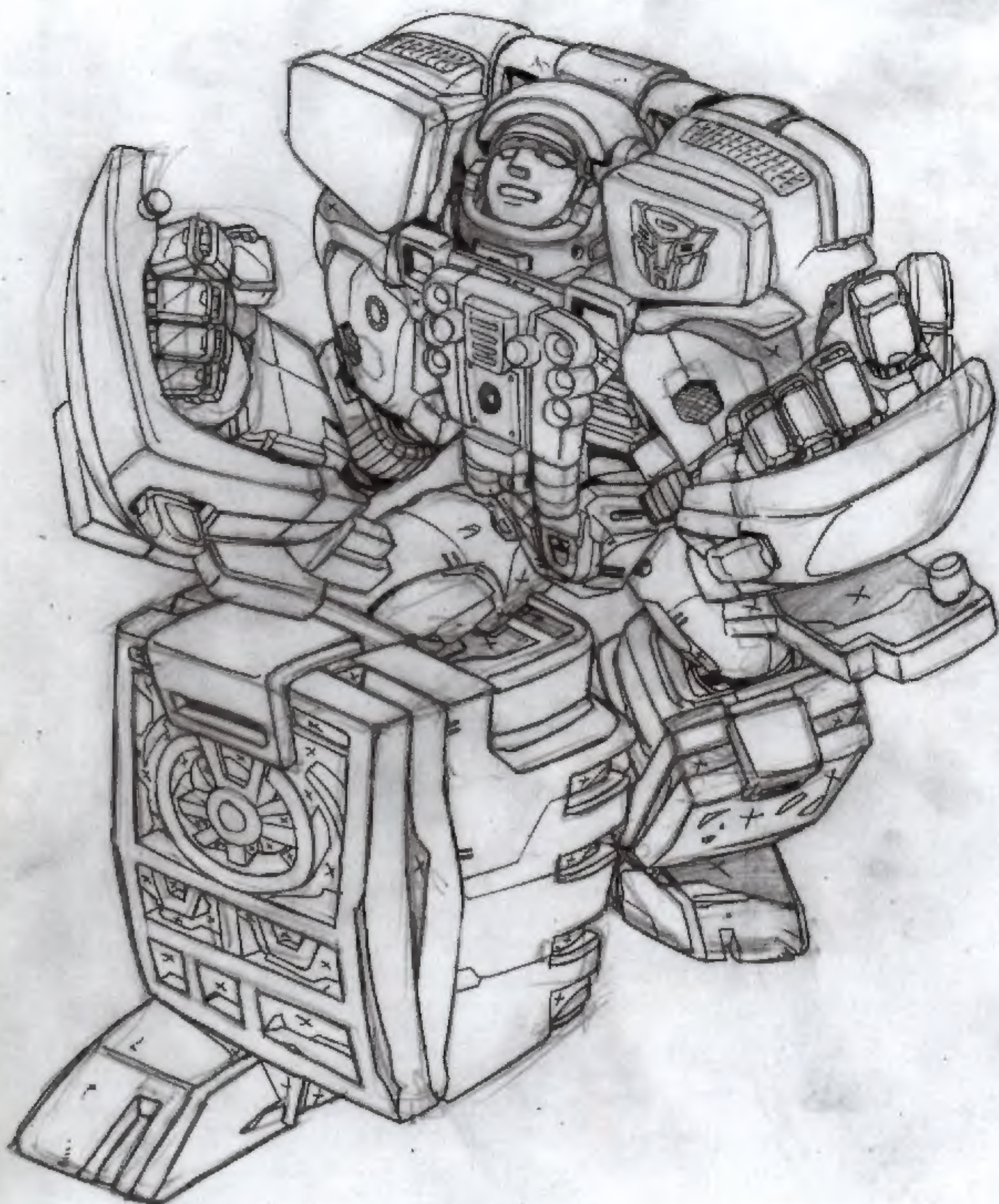**Pat:** Now we try to produce the first book in advance before we launch the series. It's

really crucial to us to get on time. Sometimes an artist will get sick, and sometimes an artist will have personal problems, and we have to understand that, too. It's difficult, because we're like, "Okay, I understand that there's all these other problems, but we really have to get this to the printer." You know what I mean? As much as we understand, as much as we wish we could look at it just from a personal perspective and say, "Yo, dude, I'm sorry you're sick, that's pretty bad," or whatever; you also have to understand the business aspect of it. We also have to make sure the book goes out on time.

Sometimes we have to make some harsh decisions. As much as we love some artists, the most important thing is to get the book out on time and that it's quality work. As long as that's lined up, then we're absolutely clear with it. But that's the basis of it.
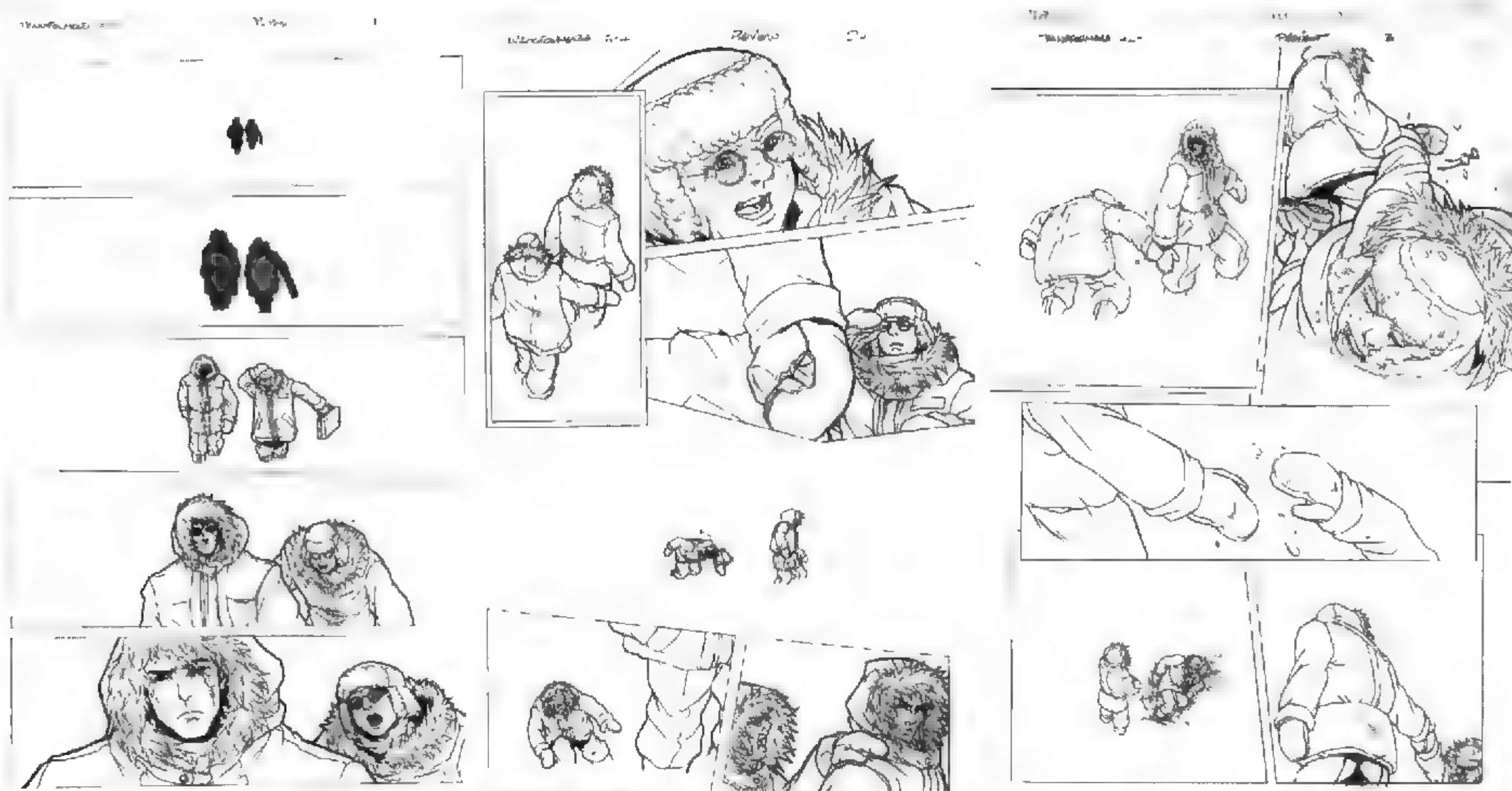
Sketch: Well, let's talk about some of the things you mentioned earlier that you learned during your time at Extreme Studios. You brought up the philosophy behind penciling and inking; what are those philosophies, and how have you built on those concepts since then?
Pat: The philosophy, to me, behind penciling is understanding how clean you have to be, what kind of pencils you have to use, the different mediums of different pencils, what soft lead does, what hard lead you use at different areas when you're drawing comics. If you're drawing really small figures then you want to use a sharper pencil, so it's more clear to the inker. When you're doing buildings or what not it's crucial to not always use a ruler but do it freehand, so that it looks more natural. Using circle templates, and what kind of templates there are to use for different perspective shots. It's just a variety of unique things, like how Photoshop is.

Photoshop has multiple brush tools and different special effects layers that you can combine and use to create what you envision. It's the same thing with the techniques of inking and penciling and coloring. I mean, with penciling you have all these different templates and all these different grades of pencils that you use to make your page clean. To choose your different shots in terms of a storyteller, understanding directing, and what shot works best for the description that the writer provides for you. With inking, it's the different tools that you can use. You can use a toothbrush, apply ink to it, and spray it onto the board. You can take white ink and apply it to a toothbrush and you could spray it onto the board, and it gives it a different effect, it'll give you stars. There are different line weights. The understanding and philosophy behind inking is cleanliness, and understanding

Pencil drawing of Bee from TRANSFORMERS

These three pages from TRANSFORMERS demonstrates Pat's dynamic camera movement.

where to put your thick and thins. And it's definitely not an easy thing to do. I mean, take a look at a lot of the inkers in the industry. They all use different methods. I know that *Spawn* has a nittier, grittier look, while Alex Garner on J. Scott Campbell would be a lot cleaner, and the lines would be a lot more crisp in terms of trying to make it look more graphic.

But in terms of *Spawn*, there's so much detail it's almost like inking three times on one page, and the way that these different stages would be applied is: first you would apply the general outline of the piece. Then you'd go in there and add more detail by adding blacks and adding little nicks here and there. And then you go on top of that and you'd ink with a white nib, and would kind of texturize the whole piece. That step alone takes a very long time, and Danny Miki is an incredible inker for doing the amount of detail that he does on each page. I highly respect him for that, because Danny Miki really develops new techniques and new styles for his pages, and it's just incredible to watch him work as fast as he does. I mean, for the amount of work that he puts into each page, it's incredible how much detailing he puts on it, and how much he helps the penciler.

Sometimes the penciler will just do something very simple, like a layout or something, and sometimes an inker has to go in there and really act as a penciler and go on top of it and make sure it's clean and presentable for a comic book. Just as sometimes the inker has to act as the penciler,

and the same holds with the theory of coloring.

Understanding color concepts; what works with what color and how shadows work, how light works when it's projected, and, if there's objects in the way, how does that reflect upon each object. Shadows, and lighting, and color schematics you really have to know your color schematics. And understanding all that is such a crucial thing. I think coloring is 50% of the ballgame, especially what we do here at Dreamwave. Color is so crucial to us. Because we are very open with color, we have to make sure that color takes its place at that point.
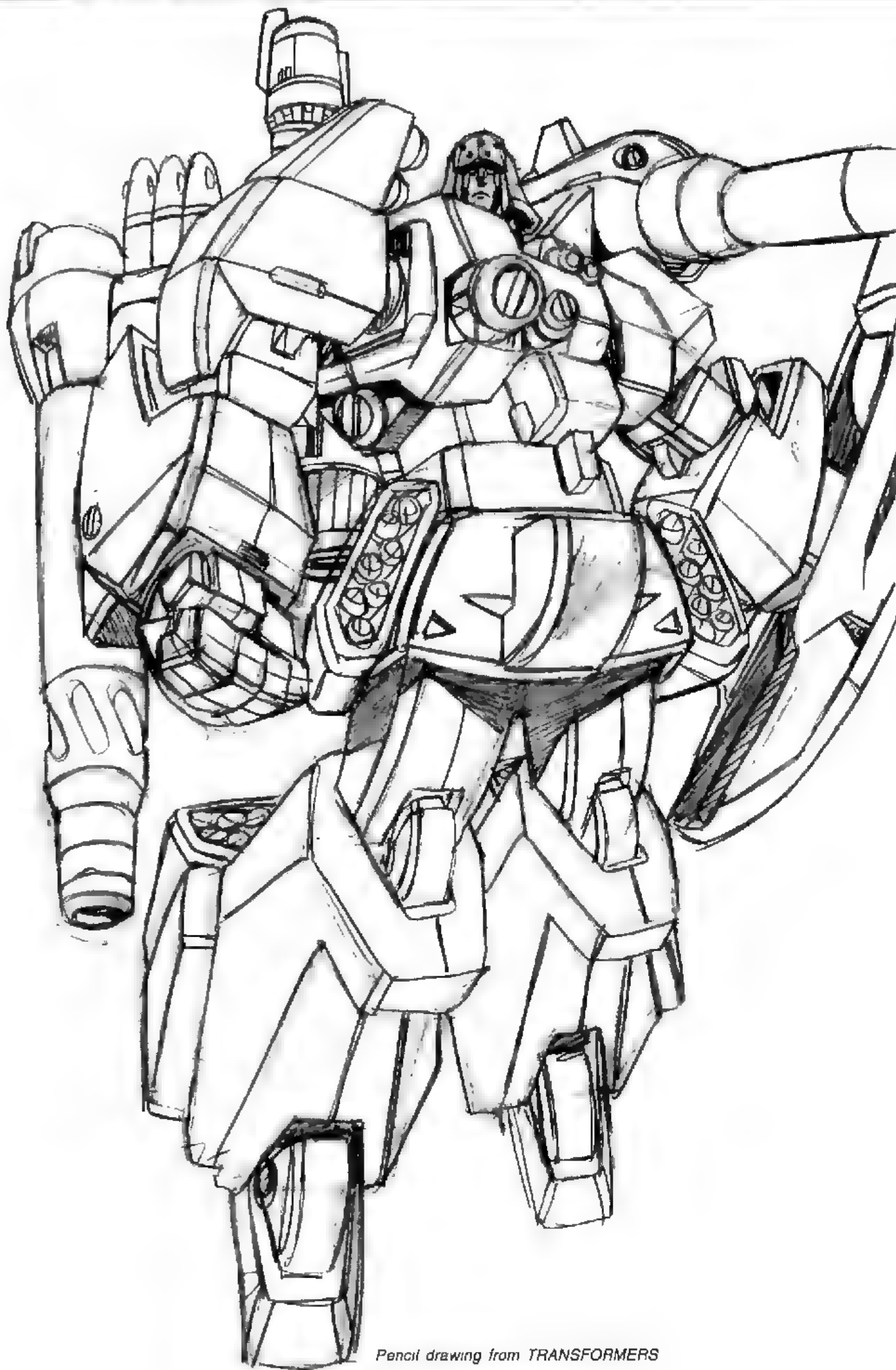
What I've learned is that; taking what I feel are the best elements, taking those elements of what I've learned and studied, and putting that together and forming what I believe would be the most interesting way of developing comic books. Also, because the majority of our work is in anime style, we tend to be able to simplify some areas, and make some areas more detailed. And sometimes you really have to find the tricks of the trade of the different stages so that we can put a comic book together faster. And there are certain techniques in all the areas, whether it be penciling, inking, or coloring…there are techniques and ways in which you can speed things up and make things work quicker.

And that's understanding the business side of it as well. As much as we'd like to take ten days on each page, we can't. We have to make sure that a page gets done on a

daily basis, and that it is consistent with the work of the next person. And so, with the majority of the guys that work with me personally on my own book, I have personally trained the majority of them. Except for a few exceptions, with a few individual artists, when artists come in to work on production in-house, I sit with them for hours upon hours trying to get them to understand the philosophy behind what we do here, and why we do some things, and how we put it all together.

Sketch: Can you tick off a few of the more important aspects that you impress upon new artists? I'm thinking especially about coloring, since it is so important to what you do at Dreamwave.

Pat: The colorist should understand the medium, that they should color based upon the type of story it is, and the style of penciling. If you look at, for instance, *Fate of the Blade*, which is one of the new titles that we're putting out - because it's more realistic, the penciler needed a colorist that could provide a very dark tone, and who could make the work very realistic in color. It's very difficult to kind of mix and match the teams that are well suited to each other, and that also understand the business as well. We are very specific with each individual title and comic book that we produce. If you look at a new title that we're producing called *Necronus*; it has a more dark tone. It's very futuristic, it has certain film noir elements to it, and it has to have a realistic look. And so we will choose very

Pencil drawing from TRANSFORMERS

of our projects.

We have a very tight crew here. It's like one big family. Everyone here understands the business aspect of it. Still, we go skateboarding together, you know? It's a really exciting studio to be in, and I'm really grateful to the guys that have worked their butts off for the last three years, and also for the new guys, who are really working their butts off and trying to get these books out. When we hire people, we don't hire people just because they're great artists; we want to make sure that they want to be here. They're here because they want to do a good job, and they want to make sure that the book goes out on time, and they understand the business aspect as well. And they're friendly people.

We've hired a few that kind of caused a lot of trouble in the studio, and it was very problematic. So we always look to hire people who are just nice people that won't cause trouble, will do a great job, and understand the business aspect as well. [General laughter.]

Sketch: Why don't you walk me through the creation of a typical Transformers *tale?*
Pat: We'll sit down, and Chris Sarracini will throw in a bunch of ideas and I'll throw in a bunch of ideas. And Chris will ask me, "What do you want to see? What kind of genre? What do you want the audience to feel like when they're reading this book? Where do you want each issue to end, and how much suspense do you want to build up for the next issue?" There are so many areas of the writing. I probably can't explain it better than Chris Sarracini, but definitely a lot of us put our ideas together. I wouldn't say I know *Transformers* incredibly well, but I know *Transformers* well enough to have a pretty good idea of what the public wants to see

Sketch: So once you and Chris have hammered out the basic plot, what's next?
Pat: Basically, Chris Sarracini will give me an outline of what he sees as each issue being. So he'll give me a general idea of the story. And from there we'll break it down, and we'll be very specific about what kind of characters we want to see in each issue. Chris will share with me the important areas that need to be mentioned, and we'll just keep deciphering it until it gets to the point where Chris feels comfortable enough to start writing the script.

Chris is like magic. When you give him something to work on he just goes ballistic, and he throws his flavors left and right. He just has so much imagination and so much skill to pull the reader in. And I usually just let Chris do his thing. I don't really step in and say, "Hey, I really like how this is." I trust him enough to know that he's going to do the

specific artists, and utilize their talents and produce the highest quality book that we can within the genre that it is. And if we're doing a more bouncy book, something on the level of *Yu-Gi-Oh* or *Pokemon*, we'll have fruitier colors, and we'll have the style that suits it best. If *Transformers* was a darker book, or had a style that I couldn't personally do, then I wouldn't give it to myself just because I have more experience penciling. I would rather give the penciling job to someone else who could do a better job.

I think that's the most important thing, that we look at the visuals from alternate angles. And every artist that comes in here, they need to know what suits the book the best, and to kind of color in that style. We don't want to change anyone's style. We try to look for an artist who already has a specific style of coloring, or penciling, or inking that matches that particular style that we're looking for. But if some of them aren't as trained as they could be we try to train them more and more, until we feel comfortable enough where they're able to work on one

best that he can, and he's going to put his highest quality work in the comic books that he produces. Again, it always works differently with different comic book writers. But specifically with Chris Sarracini, I let him loose and let him do what he kind of wants to do

Sketch: Have you had to spend a lot of time designing new characters and such for the series, and how much interaction is there between you and Chris at that stage?

Pat: If there's anything specific that I need to design, like Lazarus in *Transformers* Volume 1, I have to conceptually design him first before I actually go in there. Same thing for the jackets that each character wears, and certain areas, like the storage facility the Transformers were in when Lazarus was brainwashing them, I need to visually see what that looks like. And that was more mental than it was on paper. It was more putting that together visually as I'd get the script passed on to me. And once Chris gives me a general idea, and I envision that in my head and jot some of that art work down on paper, I'll pass it on to Chris, and Chris will review it, and then Chris will get a better idea of what I see. And as he finishes writing the script, he'll pass that on to me to take a look at, and from there I just start working away

Chris is awesome. Sometimes he's very lenient. Like in the battle scenes, I'll just take what I see and throw the battle scene together. And then Chris has some very specific shots that he would like to see. He'll be like, "Worm's eye view. Light source coming from so and so." And it could have details down to the folds in their jackets. It's very precise, and that's great because he envisions it, and he sees it. It's great to work with a writer who envisions that in his head. It's great because we have a perfect match, because the style that he writes in is very similar to my mentality. And it relates very well to what I see in the storyline, and how I want to set up the colors, as well. Chris and I, our mind frames are very much in synch. We think very much alike in terms of color theory, and in terms of the story lines, what we prefer to write is very similar, as well. So it's a great team.

Sketch: How do you start creating the art? Do you begin by doing some small thumbnails, or do you go right to the boards with your layouts?
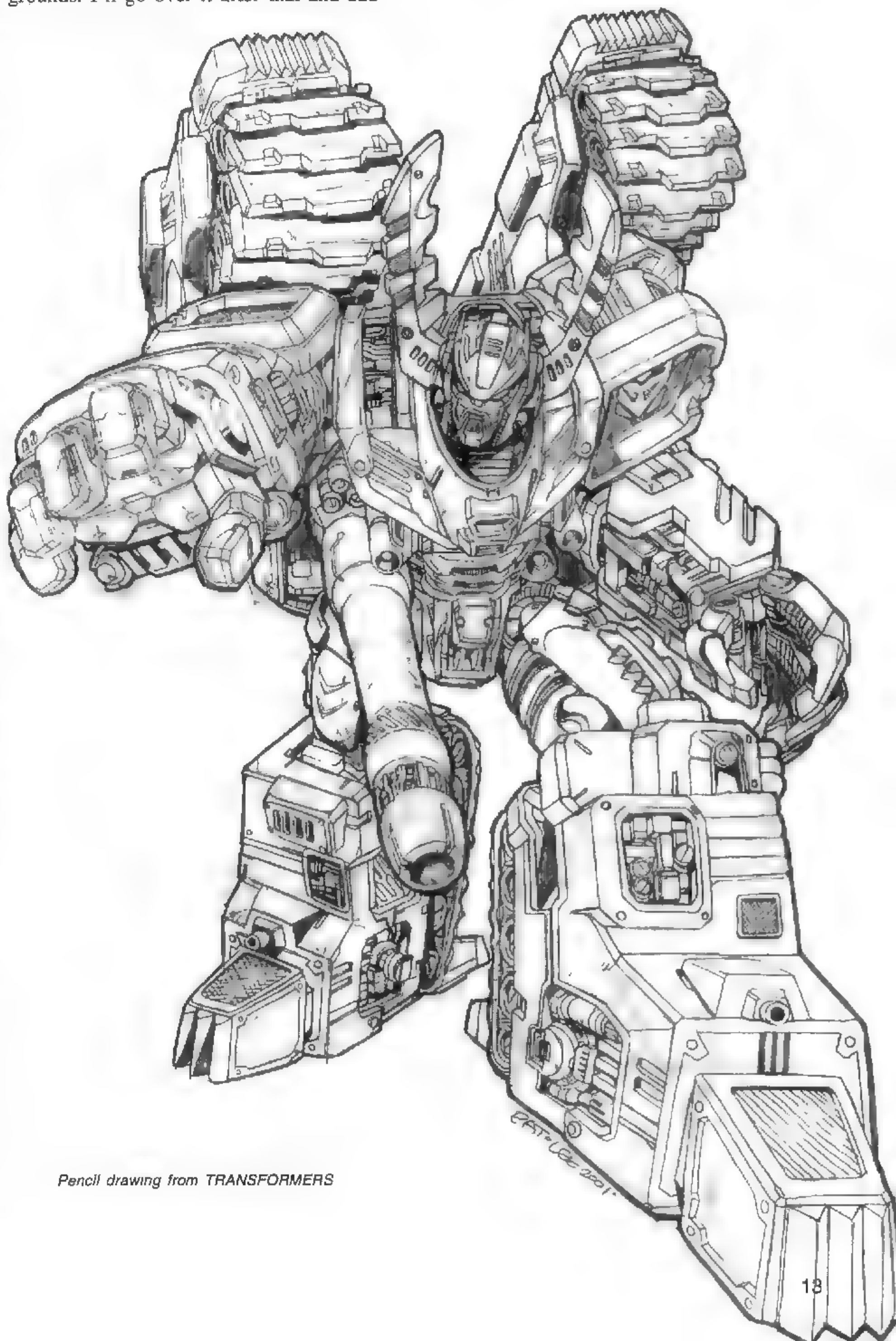
Pat: I lay out two pages on an 8.5" by 11" sheet. I do the block shapes, or sketches, if you will. And I will even go to the point of inking the layouts so it's more clear. Then I'll have an artist blow them up to 11" by 17", and have them light box each individual one. Then the person who light boxes the page on 11" by 17" cardstock paper

will drop it off at my desk, and I will go in there and pencil the foregrounds. And then basically it goes to the background artist and I say, "This is what I see, this is what I would like, and this is the kind of shot that it is." And he'll go in there and fill in the backgrounds. From there it's given to Rob Armstrong, who does all the inking.
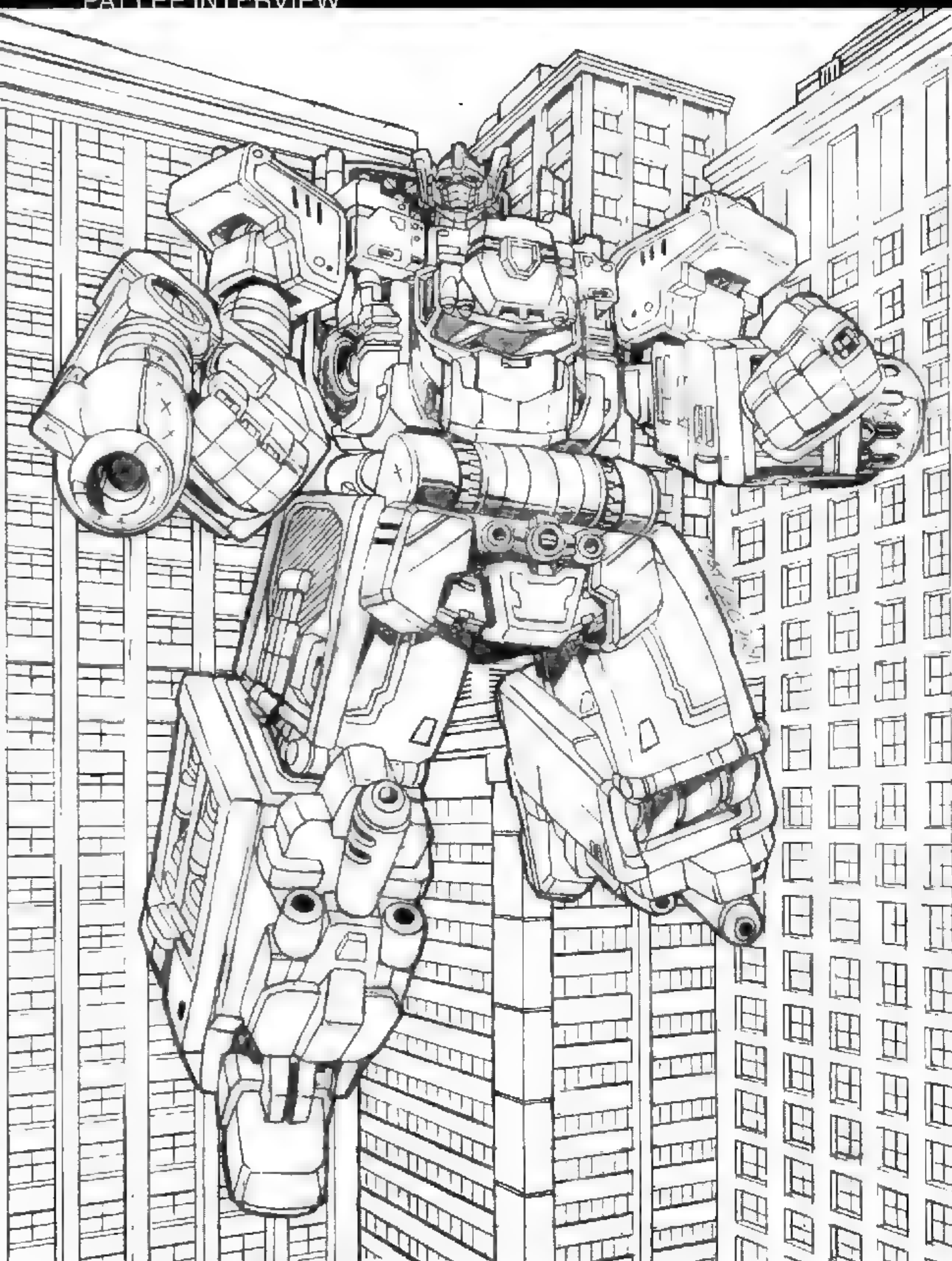
Then it gets passed on to one of our color flaters, who puts in the base colors of each page. It gets scanned in at 300 dpi, gets shrunk down to comic size, and they start coloring it with Photoshop. Once the flats are done, then we give it to one of our head colorists, Ramil Sunga, who goes in there and airbrushes the background, paints the backgrounds, and color seps the foregrounds. I'll go over it after that and add

any necessities, like special effects. With Ramil, I don't have to add anything, because he's phenomenal. But if it's a newer colorist, I'll add special effects and certain elements to the page.

From there it gets passed on to editorial. Roger [Lee] will look at it. Derek Choo-Wing and Ted Pun will go through the pages together and see if there's anything that they think we could change. From there it gets passed on to some of our editorial staff. Aaron Watanabe, out in California, will review it and make sure that there are no mistakes in terms of the art, as well as the lettering. So it's a very long process, but it actually all gets done in a month. It's definitely crazy.

Pencil drawing from TRANSFORMERS

Pencil drawing from TRANSFORMERS

Sketch: *Right, and that's for each page. What about the lettering? Do you guys do that in-house, too?*

Pat: Oh, I forgot the lettering! Well, once the page has been colored, and Roger -who is my brother, Vice President, and is Editor-in-Chief - looks it over and makes sure that it's all good and clear, he passes that on to Derek and Ted who ship it off to Dreamer Design, that does the lettering. And then it comes back to us, and we send those files to Aaron Watanabe, who makes sure the scripting is okay, and the lettering is okay. From there it gets passed on to Tony Kelly, which is Kell-O-Graphics, film output, they do the CMYK. And they do the preparation for the film there. It takes them anywhere from three to five days to produce one book. And after that it gets sent to Quebecor, to get it printed.

Sketch: *Well, I'm tired. [General laughter.]*
Pat: It's a very long process.

Sketch: *What kind of tools are you using in terms of pens, ink, pencils, and paper?*
Pat: In terms of inking, I use a Crowquill or Hunts 102, with Pelikan ink. Unfortunately, Pelikan has stopped distribution of their ink and they've gone into pens. So now I use Black Magic for my ink, and what I do is I add a very small percentage of water to it to make it a little more smooth. I use a lot of Japanese inking pens with different tips, like brush tips, and .005 or .05 pens to produce the small details. I prefer to ink with marker just because I have a little more freedom and control.

Sketch: *Is there a particular marker you're fond of using?*

Pat: Well, in terms of coloring, I use all Japanese markers. I don't know the specific names of them, because I actually have a friend who gets them for me. But I use all kinds of different inking tools. If it's not a nib, it's usually just a brush tipped marker with different widths or different lengths. And I also use the smallest marker, which is a .005 Rotring pen, and I use that for really fine detail. Once in a while I'll use zip-a-tone to get different gradients.

When penciling, I'll vary. Sometimes I'll use a regular mechanical pencil if I'm going really fast. But if I have time, I'll use an actual architectural pencil and a HB soft lead. But I always have to sharpen it all the time, so it gets to be a pain in the butt. I used to use blue pencil, but I don't anymore.

Michael Turner taught me a really great thing: when you're doing your layouts on top of 11" by 17" board, take one of those kneaded erasers and just brush it on top of it so that it's still visible, but just barely. And then you go over that and sharpen up your lines more clearly. That was a very unique and very helpful tool to use, and I really appreciate that Michael had the time to come into the studio and teach us that. Again, it's great to talk to all of these professionals, and they have all these neat little tricks which are really helpful to make things quicker.

Sketch: *Why did you give up on the blue pencil?*
Pat: Just because I didn't feel there was a necessity to use it. It was too soft, and it's hard to erase. What Michael Turner taught me was to just use a regular pencil and just sweep it with a kneaded eraser. It still works the same way a blue pencil does. The only thing that a non-repro blue pencil really does is you can't see it that much when you photocopy it. But who really cares? I just don't find it very useful. I used to use it a lot, then I realized, "Why am I using this? It doesn't really do anything." [General laughter.]

Sketch: *What kind of paper are you using for layouts on the 8.5" by 11" sheets?*
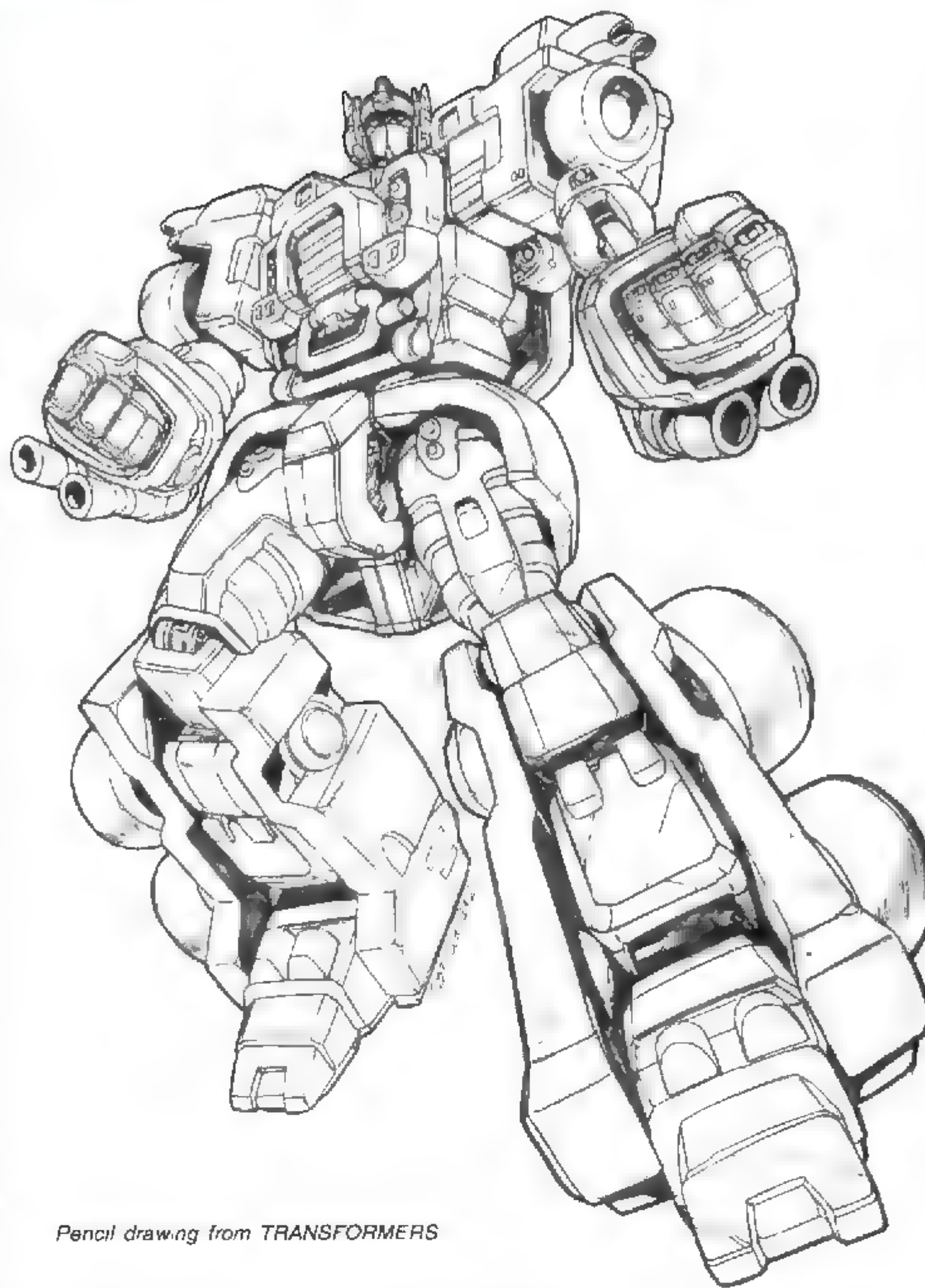**Pat:** Okay, for the 8.5" by 11", I created my own little boxes. They're like these Dreamwave boxes that I've created for layout sizes, and the layouts are designed so that when you blow them up at 200% they exactly fit the 11" by 17" art board, and that works for me.

The hardest part in producing a penciled page is the layout. Everything else is smooth sailing. But it's the layout, and the shot you choose, which is the most crucial thing in developing a comic book page. Because, once you have the layout and the shot that you want, all it really is from there is light-

ing, and the style you choose to pencil it in. So with my style, the hardest thing for me on each page is the shot that I choose to use. To me that's about 40% of completing a page; the actual layout. And if I can make it that small, and it's saving me time, why not? And then I can get someone to blow it up to 11" by 17" while I work on another page.

It definitely is great to have a whole team that does certain areas, like backgrounds, and to blow up those pages on the light box, and a special effects crew. It's kind of cool to have all these individual areas in the company, so it makes things a lot quicker. The more people you have on each book the faster the book goes out there, and the higher the quality. If you look at a lot of Chinese comic books, they have like fifty guys working on one book, and it comes out once a week. People wonder, "How the hell do you put out one book a week?" Well, it's simple. You get like twenty people to work on it! [General laughter] We try our best to get the books out on time. It's very important to us that it does. And sometimes when you're dealing with certain artists, it's very hard to get certain books out on time. That's why we really believe in hiring new talent. There definitely are a few, select professional artists that we choose to work with that are consistent, that always produce a book on time, and that have high caliber. And a lot of them are my friends.

But sometimes it's very difficult. To have certain artists take five days on one page, that's unacceptable in this business, you know? It's okay when you're doing video game design work in which you have a whole year to develop a certain product, but when you're doing comics, you have to do a page a day. You've got to get that book on a roll. Sometimes artists take advantage of you, because they're like, "Oh, I've got three weeks to produce the entire book. So that gives me twenty-one days. Oh, I'll start work in like, four days." It's tough, and that's why I prefer to work with people who are local, and if I work with people who are elsewhere, then I have to know them. I have to know where they

Pencil drawing from TRANSFORMERS

come from, how fast they are, how dedicated they are, and how much they want to be a part of the company. But if they're in-house I get to lean over their shoulder and say, "How many pages have you done today?"

Sometimes I'm a very scary person when things aren't getting sent out on time. And that's an unfortunate thing, because nobody wants to be friends with me! [General laughter] No. But that's the life I lead, and I chose it, and I'm happy with it.

Sketch: Does working in that smaller size help you with laying it out, because it allows you to see the entire page?
Pat: Oh, absolutely. I think the smaller the layout is, the more you can do it. Because it's so small, the eye doesn't roll around. It's just looking at one spot, and you can visualize it better. So it definitely helps me visualize the page as a whole.

Sketch: Does the storytelling aspect of comics seem to come naturally to you, or do you have to work at it sometimes?
Pat: At times. I would say a lot of times I just let it come out of my mind. Like I

already have it set, what shot I want, it's just a matter of taking that and applying it on paper. Being in comics for the past nine years, you kind of get the hang of it and you just get used to it, you just pull the images. I'd say 80% of the time I can get the concept that's in my mind and apply it on paper. But there's a good strong 20% where I'm like, "Man, I just want to get this done!" I get really aggravated and it's like, "That's it, I need a cigarette!" [General laughter.]

It's not only drawing that I have to do. I have to check emails, I have to be the Art Director, I have to be sure all the books and all the pages are Okay...I have to look over every final page. Sometimes it gets really hectic, and then, after all of that, I have to sit down and I have to draw comic books. And sometimes it's just really frustrating because at the same time I'm penciling I'm not focused, and I'm thinking, "Well, is this book going to b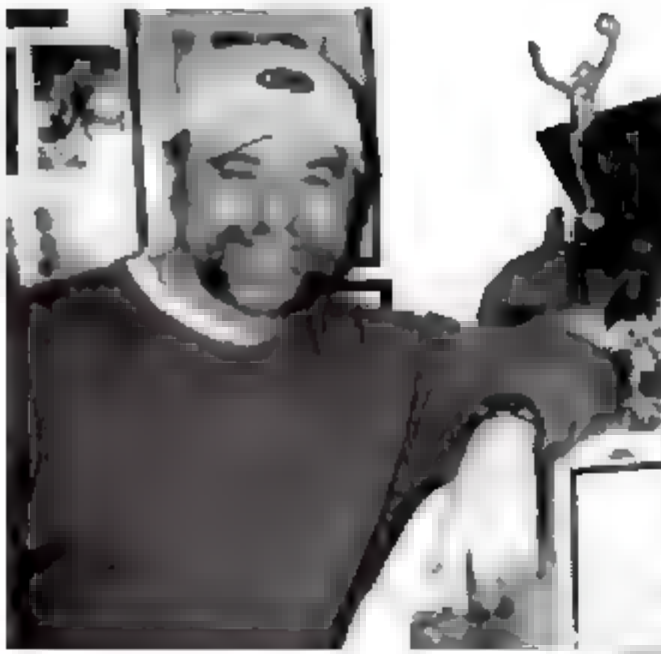e on time?" or, "When is that book shipping?" and so on. So it's like my mind is all over the place. And that's why I grab my MP3 player and sit at a cafe for like three hours and tune it out, and I just don't accept any phone calls, you know?

That's because when I draw I have to be really focused, or else I'll produce crap. I really have to sit in my chair and just concentrate on what's in front of my face, rather than concentrating on the billion things around me. Usually I get the layout to look the way I want it to look. But sometimes everyone gets those mind blocks.

Sketch: What kind of paper do you use?
Pat: Well, we actually use Strathmore boards. We get our supply from Blue Line Pro. We use the same stock of paper all the time. I don't know the specifics of the type of Strathmore board it is, but it's really high quality, and it does not bleed. It's just a great board to work on. It's pretty standard with every professional comic book company. But, preferably, I'd rather just work on original Strathmore board. But you can't really get that anymore; it's really hard to

BEAU SMITH
From The Ranch
FULL COURT PRESS RELEASE

Let's look at a few hard facts. If you're Frank Miller and you sneeze...it's news. If you're Kevin Smith and you decide not to wear that same sweatshirt and short pants.... it's news. If you spot Neil Gaiman in a bright Hawaiian shirt... it's news. But, if you're like the most of us trying to get that first big break, or any kind of a break short of an arm or leg, getting the notice of the press isn't that easy.

The first thing that I can recommend for you to do is to keep your plan simple. A press release is a good starting point. They aren't hard to do They're not difficult to write, and with the internet they aren't hard to get out there. The main thing is to keep it simple and not try and over do it.

I've been writing press releases for over twenty years. I've written them for all the various companies that I've worked for: Eclipse Comics, Image Comics, Todd McFarlane Productions, McFarlane Toys, Blue Line Pro, Idea and Design Works, and most importantly...myself!

Within this column you'll see a sample of one of my press releases. This is a recent one that was sent out from IDW Publishing for my *Wynonna Earp* trade paperback. What I'm gonna do is dissect it a little, and let you see the few easy steps that you need to follow to write your own press release and get it out there.

Let's get out the pocketknife and start cuttin' this thing up:

Figure One:
Press Release I.D. and Release Date
Here you will announce that this is a PRESS RELEASE and under that the release date. More times than not you want it to read FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. After all...ya don't want 'em to keep it a secret.

Figure Two:
Immediate Contact Information
Here you state the person's name that the media should contact for more information on the press release. This should be the point person. The one knowing most about the project. The name of the company that is producing the project should also be listed, as well as the contact person's phone number and e-mail address.

Figure Three:
Press Release Title
This is very important. You want the title to have the name of the project in it, as well as being something that will catch their eye and imagination to make them wanna read the press release. Since this is about Wynonna Earp, there is an immediate image given to the reader because of the name "Earp." It represents cowboys, gunfighters, old west, and gives them an idea of content. Following up with that you have "High Concept at High Noon." That reinforces that western topic, and sparks more interest in the press release content.

Figure Four:
Press Release Sub-Title
This is important to lead the reader into a more precise meaning of what the title has already given. It tells what the project is; a graphic novel, and it also mentions the company that is involved; IDW.

Figure Five:
Date and Intro
Here you give the exact date of the press release and the location of where the press release is being manufactured. There is also the introduction. Here you follow up on the teaser info that was given in the title and subtitle. This is your main tease point - the lure to get them to read through the whole press release to find out everything. It should be catchy without being too cute or long. You don't want to lose them here. You let them know whose project this is, and info on that person.

Figure Six:
Press Release Meat
Here is where you hit the reader with the hard facts of the project. You tell them what the project is, what kind of audience it will relate to, and what they can expect. This is where you plant the seed of what you want them to think of the project. Tell them what they will see so they WILL see it.

Figures Seven through Eleven (or as many needed):
Creator Identification
Here is where you intro and identify the various creators involved with the project. It's always advantageous to include quick reference on their more high-profile work. Take this in the order of the project. The project's main creator should begin the listing, followed by the other supporting creators. It's always good to add small bits about the story line or project's origin here as well. The amount of paragraphs depends on how many creators and artists are involved. Always try and keep it short.

Figure Twelve:
Quote
Here is where you want to insert a quote from the project creator or main participant in the project. It's better if the quote has some wit interwoven with some hard facts, or a bit of info that only the creator can give. Try and stay away from the usual hype or any cliché. You want a member of the press to read this and think that this person might be interesting enough to call upon for more quotes, an interview, or information. You might also add a quote from the sales or marketing contact for the company. This will give readers on the retail end some tips to

sell the product.

Figure Thirteen:

Product Vitals

It is important to give the project's vitals here. If it's a book you should list the price, page count, if it's in color, info on the format, and again, the company name.

Figure Fourteen:

Company Information

Here is where you give your company bio. Look at this as your own personal ad for the company. You will want to list any high profile projects you've been involved with that will add validity and recognition to your company. You want a very compact history of your company. You want to list any awards or special notification that your company has won, earned, or been a part of. Some media reprint press releases complete, and this makes yours become like a free ad.

Figure Fifteen:

Website

List your project or company website on a line alone. It can't be missed that way.

Figure Sixteen:

Additional Contact Info

You might wanna list another person in the company that the reader can reach. This is important if there are multiple branches, and it also keeps things from falling through any cracks. FULL company info should be listed complete with name(s), mailing and street addresses, phone, fax, e-mail, and website.

The ideal press release is a page long. A page and a half max. Any more than that and the chances of it being read are slim. You can send a longer one if necessary for the internet press. There is usually more space there. For print media, though, keep it shorter.

Don't attach a large file to your internet mailing. Send a small, easy to work file; then in your press release add that if any additional jpegs, files, etc. are needed to please contact you, and you will send them in the format requested.

Only send out a press release if you have something of worth to say or promote. New projects, or ones with contests or special tie-ins, are prime examples of items warranting a press release.

This is the basic format of how to write and send a press release. More than enough to get you started. As you can see, by using my own project - *Wynonna Earp* - I was able to put to use some of my shameless self promoting articles from previous issues of *Sketch*. My press release is here for a paying, captive audience, and it's one great big free ad! Being cunning and without morals sometimes pays off. I am guilty of both.

Keep it simple, but keep at it.

From the Ranch,
Beau Smith
The Flying Fist Ranch
P.O. Box 706
Ceredo, WV 25507
beausmith2@earthlink.net

PRESS RELEASE _____ Figure one
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For Information,   Figure two
Please Contact:
Beau Smith, IDW Publishing, 304-453-1050

WYNONNA EARP: HIGH CONCEPT AT HIGH NOON ___ Figure three
Beau Smith's Graphic Novel Becomes Law At IDW Publishing ___ Figure four

Beau Smith 20 East Way Drive, _____ Figure five

San Diego, CA (Dec. 5, 2002) Redneck vampires without tan lines, werewolf biker bounty
hunters, a mummy hitman for the Egyptian Mafia and the badge-carrying, gun totin' great-great   Figure six
granddaughter of Wyatt Earp: enforcing supernatural law has never been this unique.

With Wynonna Earp, Beau Smith has created one of the most entertaining and interesting
properties of the year, a character and storyline that crosses over numerous pop culture   Figure seven
genres. It has action, horror, and dark humor with quirky characters and dialogue that leaves   - eleven
the reader thinking, "I wish I'd said that "

Smith is noted for a writing style that makes the reader care more about the character's life
than about explosions, guns and multi colored spandex costumes. He writes characters the
reader wants to be, and Wynonna Earp is no exception. She's a descendent of the famous lawman
Wyatt Earp and the top special agent for a new U.S. Marshal Special Operations Unit, known
among other government agencies as "The Monster Squad."

Joining Smith on this cinematic saga is Joyce Chin of Xena. Warrior Princess fame Chin
handles the pencils on the first story arc, as Wynonna Earp tries to bust Bobo Del Rey and his
redneck, trailer-trash vampires who are selling a new killer designer drug called "Hero "
Unlike those sissy vampires that Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt played, these are stump-jumping, ATV
riding, Andy Griffith-watching blood suckers that love slathering up with Coppertone and
getting a tan.

The artist on the second story arc is fan-favorite and driving force behind the hit comic
series The Transformers, Pat Lee. Pat's art fits around Smith's script like a tight dress on
Jennifer Lopez. This arc deals with Earp trying to prevent the Egyptian Mafia's mummy hitman
Raduk, Eater Of The Dead, from killing all the other crime bosses Wynonna has to side up with
a former U.S Marshal that now works as an assassin for his uncle Vito.

Noted inker and surfer Mark Irwin is the ink master over the whole book. He adds his solid
line work and enhances both the pencils of Chin and Lee.

The cover is provided by hot discovery David Cabrera. His unique sense of color and design   Figure twelve
will soon have him the talk of the comic book world.

"This is my way of joining everything that I ever loved into one big party — the real and
mythical Old West done in modern times, classic monsters with a serious twist, and just enough
tongue-in-cheek humor to make ya think it's your first French kiss all over again," said   Figure thirteen
creator and writer Beau Smith.

Wynonna Earp will be published by IDW Publishing in October 2002. It's 112 black-and-white   Figure fourteen
pages and retails for $17.99

IDW PUBLISHING is a division of Idea + Design Works, LLC, a revolutionary creative service
company with a wide range of clients including Trimark Pictures, The Upper Deck Company,
Electronic Arts, Ultima Online, WizKids, Cartoon Network, Sony Online Entertainment,
Nickelodeon, and many more. IDW Publishing focuses on a small number of high-quality titles.
Among them are Ashley Wood's Popbot, Steve Niles and Ben Templesmith's 30 Days of Night, Paul
Lee and Adam Huntley's Lurid, Chuck Dixon's The Vanishers, and the art books Uno Fanta, Dos   Figure fifteen
Fanta and Art of Armitage. Senator International has optioned the movie rights to 30 Days of
Night with Sam Raimi attached to produce.

More information about IDW can be found at their website, www.idwpublishing.com.

A jpeg of the cover is attached

For additional artwork, please contact: ___   Figure sixteen
Ted Adams
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San Diego CA 92117
(858) 270-1315 phone
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ted@ideaanddesignworks.com
www.idwpublishing.com

Sample Press Release

EVERYONE DESERVES A
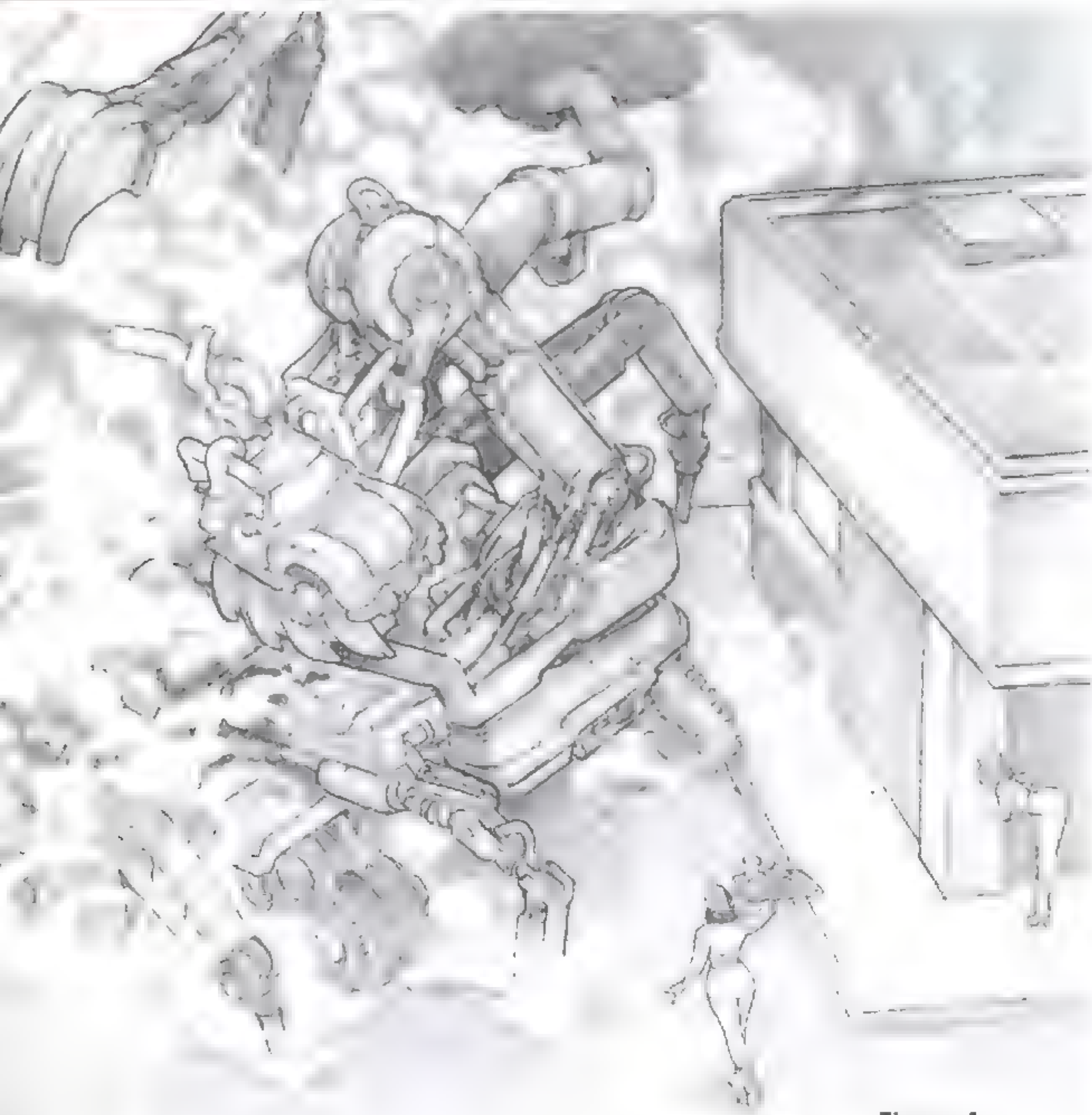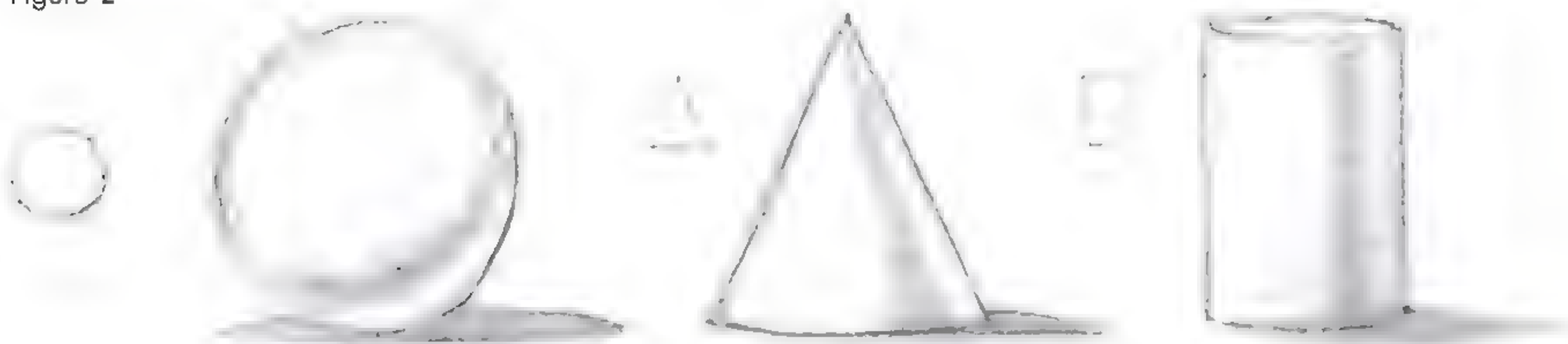# GOLDEN AGE!

Some Notes about Tones

Figure 1

#1. We can add tones to a drawing for a variety of reasons. To add texture, highlight specific story elements, to create space, create volume, or maybe just to jazz up the illustration. But adding tones can be time consuming, and in the end you might prefer to have left your illustration as a simple line drawing, as often publishers are unable to capture all of the variations you might sweat into a drawing (*Sketch* Magazine excepted, of course). The more you practice, the greater your comfort level will grow in using tones and when the use of which will add to your illustration. Don't practice to be perfect, practice to be more interesting. Ah, wisdom teeth.

Figure 2

#2. How do you turn a circle into a sphere? Add shadow, some highlights, and your circle suddenly has volume. The cone can now hold ice cream, and the can could hold French cut green beans. You've seen these simple shapes in books before, but remember: from simple shapes are complex ones made. And if you can learn now to add volume to the simple shapes, you can also learn how to add volume to the complex ones. Start with something simple by using a ball or something as a model and just add tones to the dark area. Later you can work your way up to the figure and more complicated shapes.
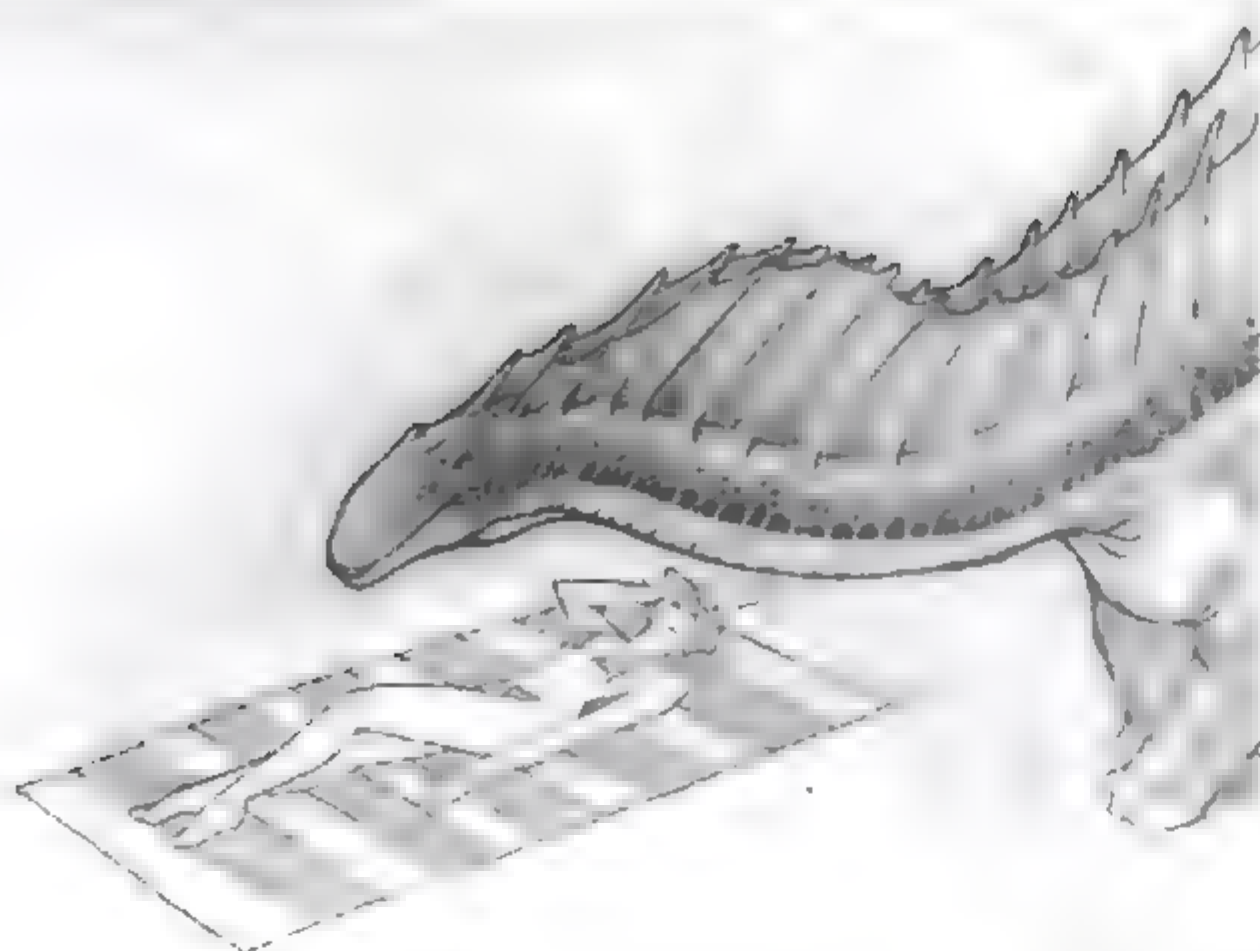
Figure 3 Where's this pet's leash?

Figure 4A

Example #1   Example #2

#3. Tones aren't reserved for shadows only, use them for anything you can get away with – perhaps to represent color variations or patterns, such as the neck markings that run along the length of this amargasaurus or the stripes in the beach towel.

#4A. When you first look at Examples #1 and #2, it appears that Example #2 is darker than Example #1, but they are both of equal darkness. A looks to be light due to the graduated tones of its perimeter, which allows the light area surrounding it to interact with and influence the tones. The light in the edges make us think that the same light is getting into the center.

There are sharp edges around Example #2; there is no transition from light to dark. The change over from light to dark is abrupt and sharp, with less light penetrating the edges to influence the center. We think less light gets in so the center must be darker, but that is just an illusion. Both Example #1 and Example #2 are equally dark.

Remember that soft, graduated tones look lighter, and sharp, even tones with crisp edges appear darker.

Figure 4B

#4B. By making the edges of the bushes in the foreground sharp and the tones of the clouds soft and fuzzy, the contrast helps to create a sense of space between the two.
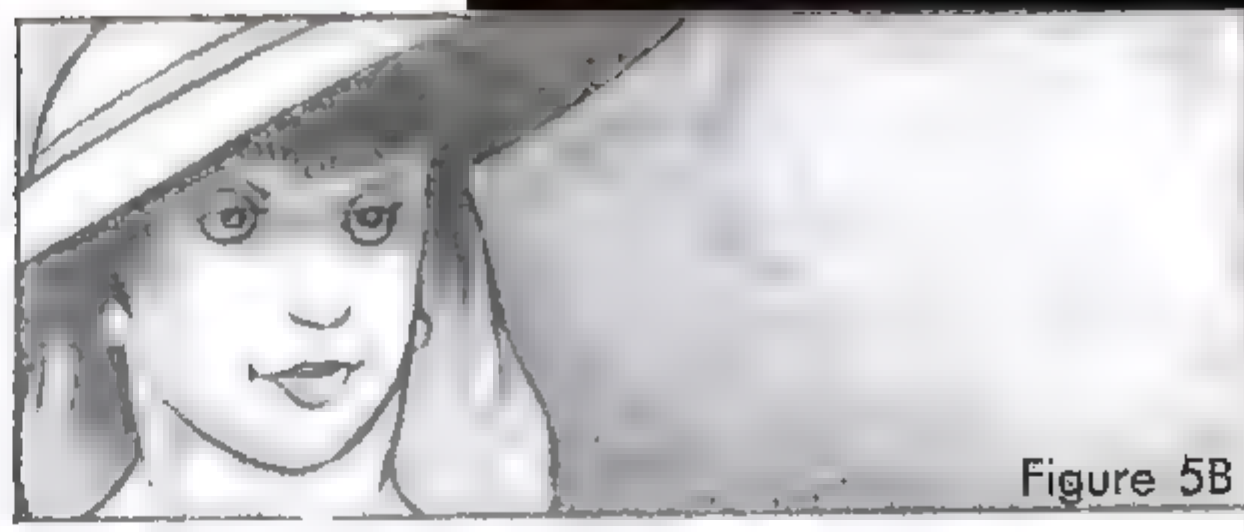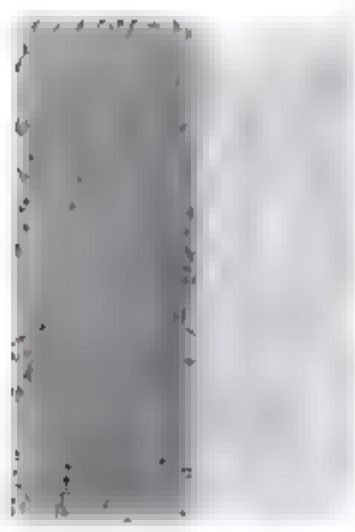
Figure 5A

Figure 5B

#5A. When tones are next to each other you have to make sure there is a definable transition from one shade to the next, whether that transition is gradual from dark to light or a sharp transition. See how this works to set off the lady and her hat in figure 5B.
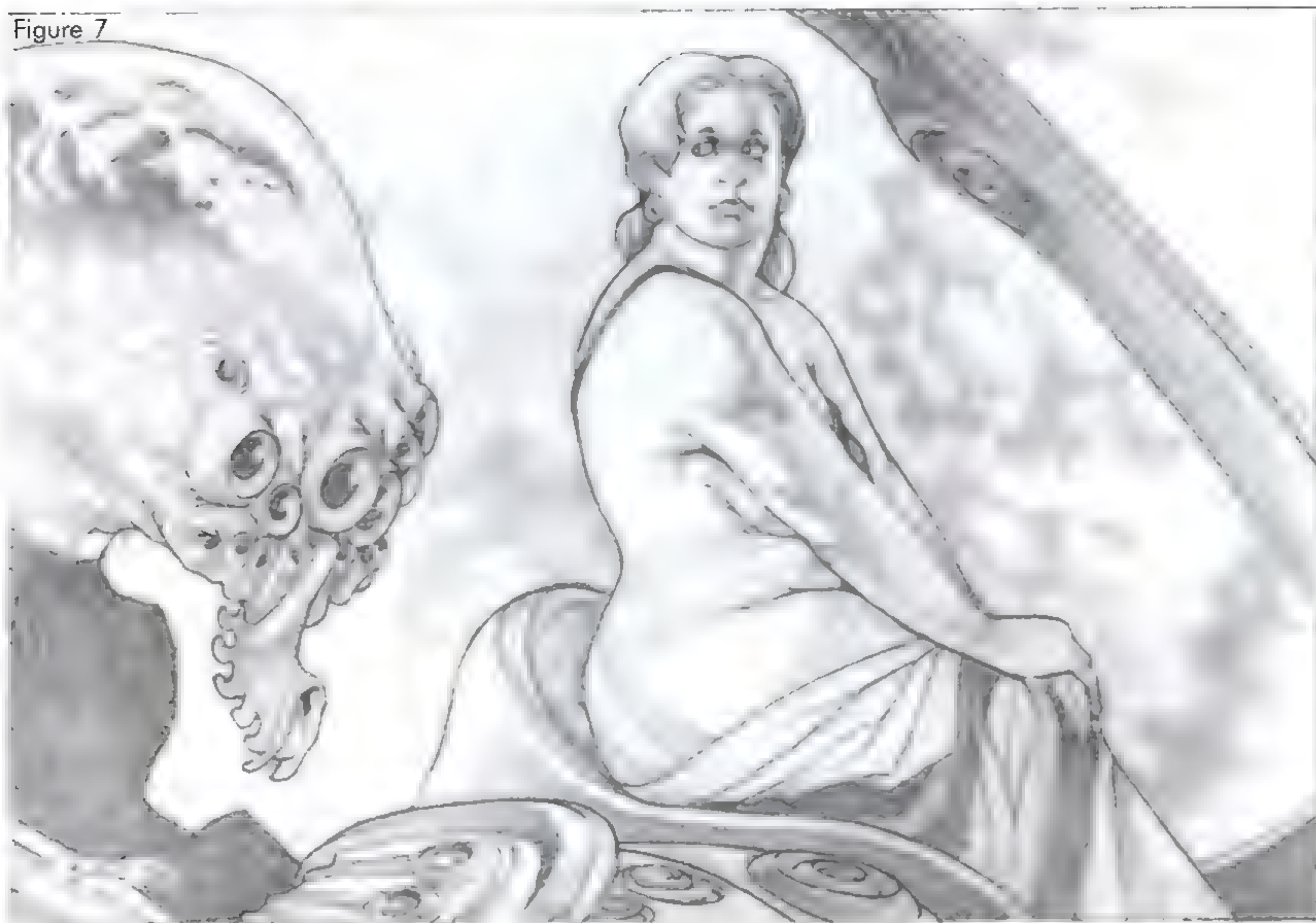
Figure 6

#6. This is an example of just "jazzing up" a picture a little. There's not much rhyme or reason to these tones other than giving the figure a more menacing look. I just added an overall tone to the entire alien, and then used an eraser to pull up a few highlights.

#7. In this drawing I've tried to use tones and shading to create contrasts from one story element to the next. The foreground figures and machinery are darker and sharper than the fuzzy clouds, helping build the feel of space. Molding of tone around the alien and human figure help give that old sense of volume, plus defines the light source. Also, varying tones in her toga hint at a color pattern. Simple shading also helps to bring out the texture of the alien control panel. But with all this description, there really aren't that many actual tones put into this drawing. The white areas make what tones there are seem darker by contrast. Being economical can pay off now and then.

Figure 7

ICBLDF

WE WANT YOU!
TO JOIN THE FUND!

The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to defending First Amendment rights exclusively for comic-book professionals and in comic books.

The CBLDF coordinates and funds the legal defense of comics creators and retailers whenever their rights to free speech are threatened. By becoming a Member of the Fund, you'll be supporting the rights of creators to create, retailers to sell, and readers to read the kind of comics they choose. Annual membership dues go straight to the Fund's War Chest for future cases. The 2000 Member Card features art by Evan Dorkin and Sarah Dyer and is your ticket to CBLDF Member Events across the country. To join the CBLDF or for more info, visit our web-site or call 1-800-99-CBLDF.

$25 Today Can Help Keep Comics Safe For Tomorrow.

THE COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

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CHUCK DIXON
There's Got to be a Pony Here Somewhere!
Characters and How to RE-build Them

Characterization.

It's how you create and design a fictional creation, and send them on their way.

When it works you end up with a whole person with desires, faults, strengths, quirks, and the sense that they have been someplace and are going somewhere.

When it fails you get Jason Todd.

Where to start?

Well, if you've inherited a longstanding comic book character, you pretty much have a personality framework to work within. If the character's been around a long time but is lame, then you have to find something in that framework to bring out that makes the guy work. You may need to create a whole new persona, or find something in what's there and explore it.

Let's use Firefly for example. He was the lamest of a raft of really lame Batman villains thunk up in the 1950s. His gimmick was that he was a Hollywood lighting technician who had been fired. He responded to this by donning a really goofy costume that had wings that would project lightshows to confound his foes. He named himself Firefly, and completed the motif with a large "FF" on his chest and two cute little antennae.

Batman and Robin trashed his butt inside the space of a single twelve-page story, and he was never heard from again.

Until the big comics geek that is yours truly was fishing around for a Batman villain to use in *Knightfall* and resurrected Garfield Lynns, AKA Firefly. I had memories (not necessarily fond ones) of the guy from a Batman annual that I treasured as a kid. But how to take a character whose powers and motivations were basically the same as the annoying lights at a mall opening and make him scary and formidable and interesting?

I ditched the whole light-show aspect and made him an arsonist. Not just any arsonist, but a full-on perverted pyromaniac. This guy not only dug fire, but dug watching people burn. I tossed in a twisted sexual sidelight to him to amp up the creepiness. When this guy saw a flame he saw it as a woman in the throes of ecstasy. I suggested it subtly, so as to pass the Comics

Code. Most times it didn't. Those sly foxes would catch it almost every time. I can't tell you how many times I saw pages of dancing firebabes and then they'd be missing when the comic came out.

To serve the "bug" theme, Graham Nolan and I came up with a metallic, fireproof armor costume. It had a featureless insectoid mask that was frightening, and metal wings that he could use to ride the thermals he created with his mayhem.

We'd taken a useless, forgotten, one-joke character and amped him up sufficiently to re-join the Batman

rogues gallery as a heavyweight. He even had enough juice to get into one of the cartoons. (We've got time for a shameless plug, right? In the upcoming *Batgirl: Year One* by Scott Beatty, Marcos Martin, and me we'll show the retro-origin of Firefly for the first time. So you can kind of see what I started from in my mind.)

So, if you can find a way to redeem a worthless creation like the Firefly, then you can certainly find new things to say about pop icons like Spider-man or Wonder Woman. Remember, what I did with Firefly did not violate the framework of the character. I updated his origin, but kept it in the moviemaker vein (he's a pyrotechnician rather than a lighting expert). And I kept the insect theme. Basically, he's still the same Garfield he was in the original. I added to the character rather than taking away. I didn't torque him beyond all recognition.

Don't be tempted to inflict change on a character simply to change it. If you tinker, then tinker with the intention of improving and enhancing what was already there. You don't suddenly make Batman as stupid as a co-ed in a slasher movie simply because it serves your purpose.
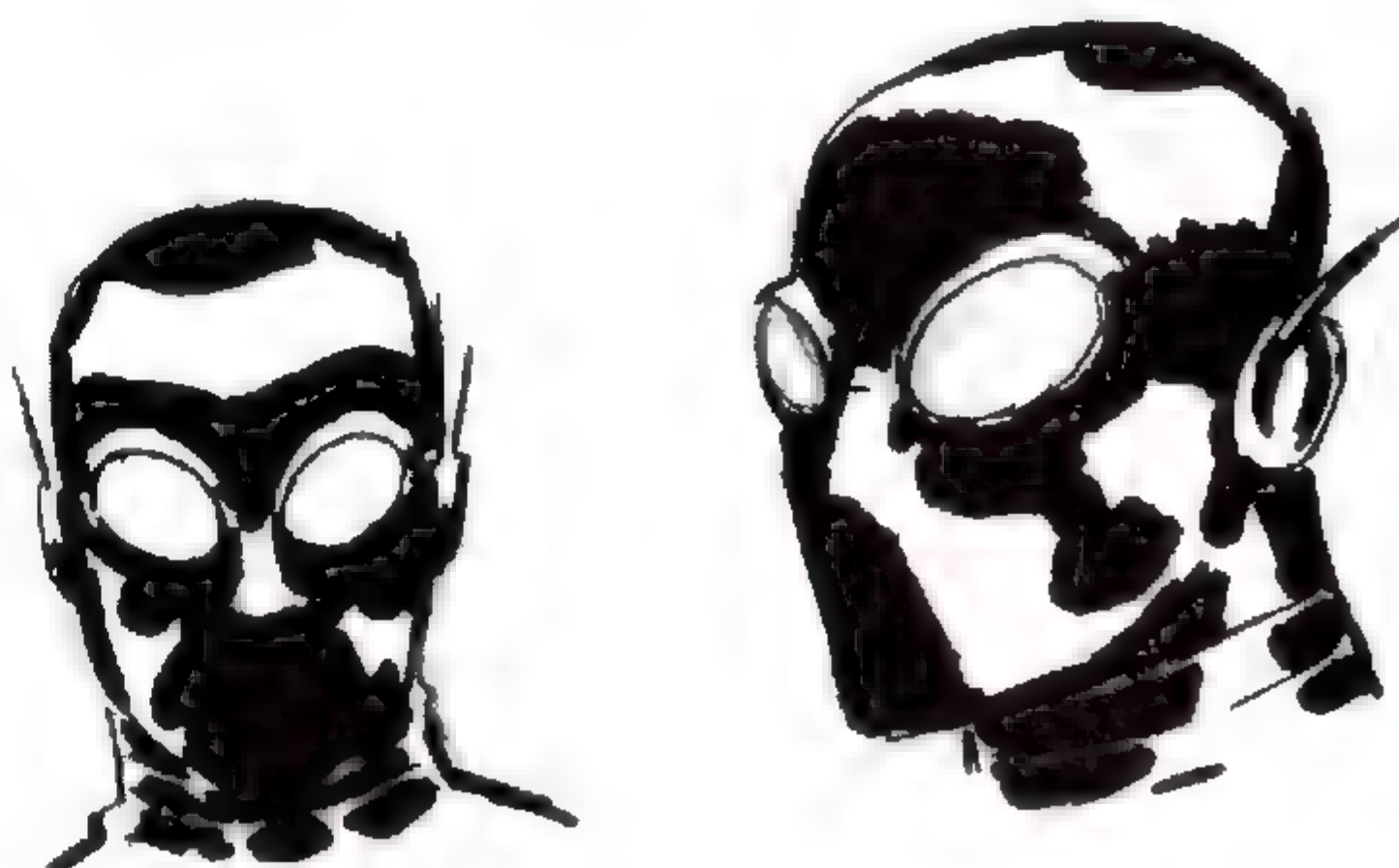
Let me give you two more examples, here using the Punisher. Frank Castle was a one-note knock-off of a Clint Eastwood or Charles Bronson character in the 1970s. With his go-go boots and "mercy bullets," he was little more than a strawman. Archie Goodwin tried to add some oomph to the character in two stories that turned him more to the Mack Bolan *Executioner* paperback enforcer type. A step in the right direction. But the Punisher really gained some depth in a Spider-Man annual written by Denny O'Neil. In this story Frank is arrested. In the back of the cop car, manacled and heading for Rykers, the Punisher is psychotically gleeful that he'll now be *surrounded* by criminals that he can kill.

Now we're talking!

But for me, the final touch, the defining character moment for Frank Castle, was in a story written by Mike Baron. In this story the Punisher begins to sense that the coterie of assistants he has aiding him (Microchip, et al.) are not taking their work for him seriously. In different vignettes he tells each one of them that, if they can't pull their weight then, "You're no use to me."

That made the Punisher real for me. He's a cold fish who cares for no one. He's dead inside. He'll use even those close to him to get back at the world that killed his family.

This brings me to my final word on this subject. You may get to write one of your favorite childhood comic book idols someday. But always remember that, for good or for bad, you would not be getting a shot at that character were it not for those who came before you and kept that fictional person alive. If you *build* on what they did you'll never go wrong.

Blue Line Pro

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COMIC BOOK ART BOARDS

EXCLUSIVE ART PAPERS

BLP COMICS

ART TOOLS & SUPPLIES
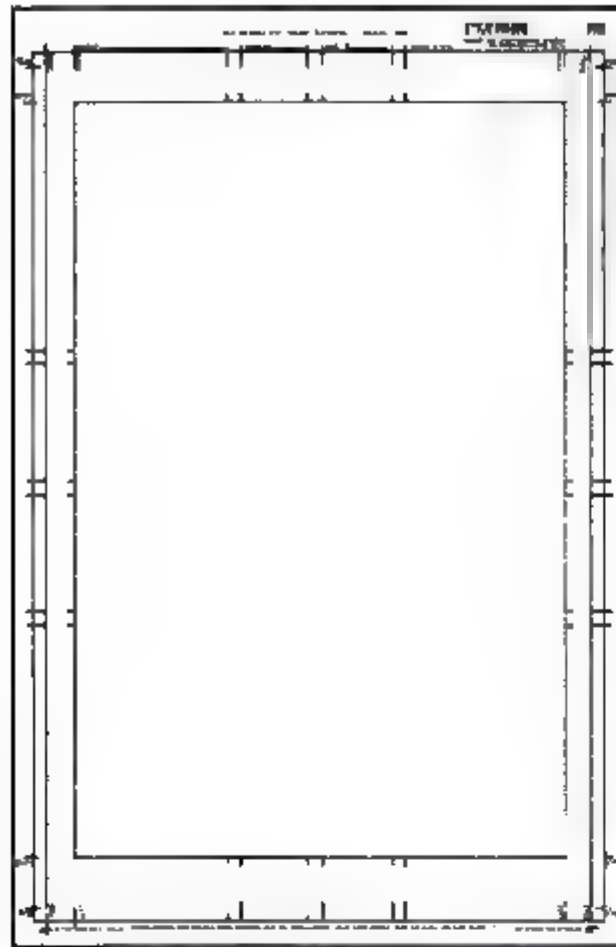
ART BOOKS

BLP FONTS
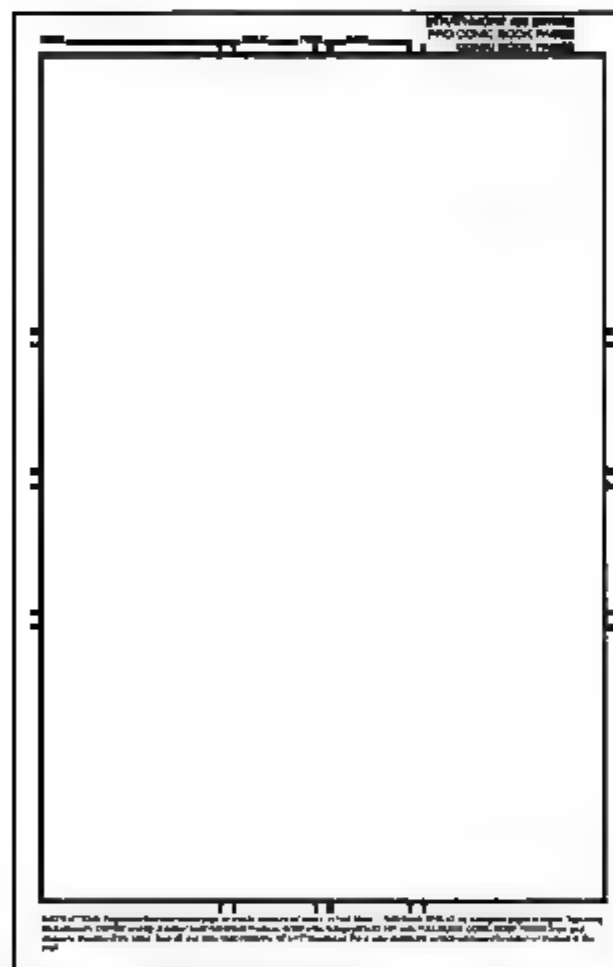
SKETCH MAGAZINE

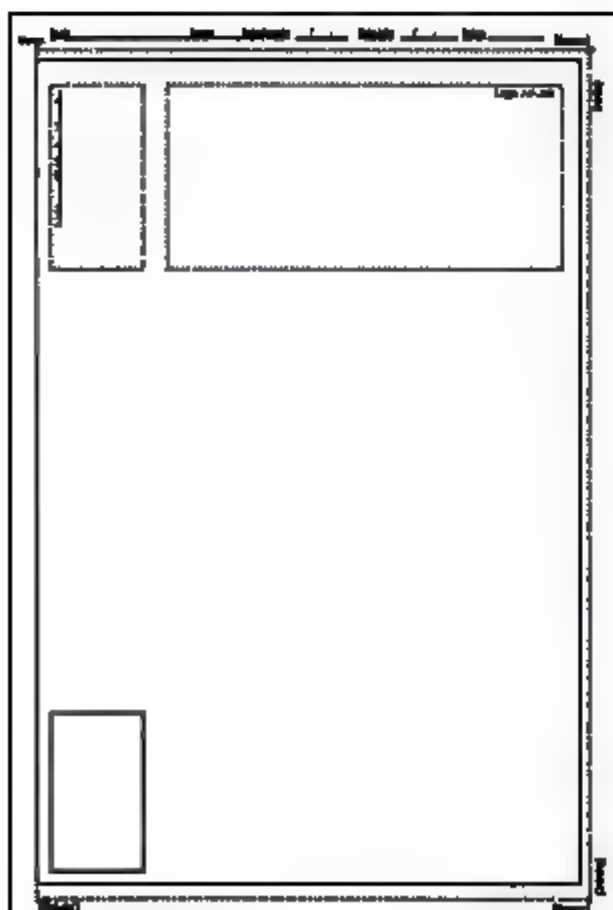# COMIC BOOK ART BOARDS and CUSTOM PAPERS

Full Trim Format Art Boards

PLY:

Ply is the thickness of the paper. A 2 ply paper has two pieces of paper pressed together and a 3 ply has 3 pieces of paper pressed together which is thicker than 2 ply.

Traditional Format Art Boards

Cover Sheets

PREMIERE300 (STRATHMORE)

300 Series Full Trim Format

PRO 300 Series Comic Book Boards is an economical heavyweight paper. Like the rest of the Blue Line products the Pro 300 Series is preprinted with a non-photo blue border that allows the artist to draw comics the actual size that professionals do.

• **PRO 300 Series (SMOOTH)** surface is a 100lb. 100% acid free board. This Strathmore board is ideal for pen ink work and is also suited for pencil and marker.

- **ITEM# BL1041 SRP $17.00**

12 pages per pack

11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged

• **PRO 300 Series (REGULAR)** toothy surface is a 100lb. 100% acid free board. This Strathmore board works well with pencils, charcoal and watercolor.

- **ITEM# BL1042 SRP $17.00**

12 pages per pack

11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged

PREMIERE400 (STRATHMORE)

400 Series Full Trim Format

400 Series already has a very serious history. Comic Book Boards 400 series is printed on the finest art paper available, **Strathmore**. Like the rest of the Blue Line products the 400 Series is preprinted with a non-photo blue border that allows the artist to draw comics the actual size that professionals draw.

• **S400 Series (SMOOTH)** surface is a 100% acid free bristol. This Strathmore board is ideal for detailed ink work and is also suited for pencil and marker.

12 pages per pack

11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged.

- **ITEM# BL1043 SMOOTH 2-PLY SRP $19.00**
- **ITEM# BL1045 SMOOTH 3-PLY SRP $28.00**

• **S400 Series (REGULAR)** toothy surface is a 100% acid free bristol. This Strathmore board works well with pencils, inks, charcoal and pastel.

12 pages per pack

11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged.

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- **ITEM# BL1046 REGULAR 3-PLY SRP $28.00**

PREMIERE500 (STRATHMORE)

500 Series Full Trim Format

500 series comic book boards is the top of the line for art paper.

Strathmore 500 is 100% cotton fiber, Acid free and unsurpassed for fine pen and pencil work.

• **500 Series (SMOOTH)** surface is a 100% cotton fiber acid free board. This Strathmore board is ideal for pen ink work and is also suited for pencil and marker.

12 pages per pack

11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged.

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- **ITEM# BL1049 SMOOTH 3-PLY SRP $57.75**

• **500 Series (REGULAR)** toothy surface is a 100% cotton fiber acid free board. This Strathmore board works well with pencils, charcoal and watercolor

12 pages per pack

11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged.

- **ITEM# BL1048 REGULAR 2-PLY SRP $41.00**
- **ITEM# BL1050 REGULAR 3-PLY SRP $57.75**

PRO COMIC BOOK ART BOARDS
(Full Trim Format)

Blue Line has taken the quality paper that they have used in the "Pro" pages for years and printed a newly designed Full Trim border format in non-photo blue ink.

This offering the artist the quality of Pro pages with an advanced page border

In addition, each pack also includes one page of Blue Line Comic Book Cover Sheets, specifically laid out with a larger image area for standard comic book cover designs.

Use pencil, ink (brush recommended), markers, wash, acrylics.

- **ITEM# BL1038 SRP $15.95**

24 pages per pack.

11" x 17" 3- ply brite art boards with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area and 1 Cover Sheet with 10 3/4" x 16" non-photo border printed/ bagged.

PRO COMIC BOOK ART BOARDS
(Traditional Format)

Pro Comic Book Boards brite white surface offers a smooth surface to pencils and inking with a brush literally glides across the surface (quill pen not recommended). Pro has offered thousands of artist the opportunity to begin their careers on a pre-printed boards like the professional publisher uses.

Traditional Format has the original 10" x 15" image border with panel markers for a traditional page layout.

Page size is 11" x 17" with a non-photo blue image area of 10" x 15". In addition, each pack also includes one page of Blue Line Comic Book Cover Sheets, specifically laid out with a larger image area for standard comic book cover designs.

Use pencil, ink (brush recommended), markers, wash, acrylics.

- **ITEM# BL1001 SRP $15.95**

24 pages per pack.

11" x 17" 3- ply brite art boards with a 10" x 15" non-photo image printed and 1 Cover Sheet with 10 3/4" x 16" non-photo image printed/ bagged.

COMIC BOOK BOARDS
(Traditional Format)

Comic Book Boards are specifically laid out with an image area for standard comic book designs. These boards like the other comic book boards offer an area to write the name of the book the artist's drawing, issue number, page number and date. This helps to keep track of your boards and where they belong. Double page spreads are a snap for an artist. Just take two comic book boards and then butt the sides together, apply tape down the back of those boards and then the artist is ready to illustrate a double-page drawing. Fast and easy with no cutting.

Use pencil ink (brush), marker, wash.

- **ITEM# BL1003 SRP $12.95**

24 pages of Brite Art Index per pack.

11" x 17" pages with a 10" x 15" non-photo image/ bagged

COMIC BOOK COVER SHEETS

These Comic Book Cover Sheets, show a border for your drawing with pre-marked bleeds for trimming with an area for the possible placement for the book's logo and company information clearly marked. This helps to keep all of the important elements of the covers from being covered up when the book logo and company info are placed later. They are 12 pages of 2-ply premium Brite art index board that come bagged and feature non-photo blue ink.

- **ITEM# BL1007 SRP $9.95**

12 pages per pack

11" x 17" art pages printed with a 10 3/4" x 16" non-photo blue border printed/ bagged.

OVER-SIZED COMICBOOK ART BOARDS
(Traditional Format Borders)

Premiere 300 regular (Strathmore)

Over Sized Comic Book Art Boards 12 per pack textured-surface pages (14 x 22) with Traditional Border. Premiere 300 Strathmore Series regular is a 100lbs paper preprinted with a non-photo blue border that is the trademark of all Blue Line Pro boards. This allows the artist to draw comics the actual size that professionals do. Professionals draw their illustrations larger then they appear in the finished product. This helps minimize mistakes. The main advantage of Strathmore is its 100% acid free feature. This prevents the signs of aging such as yellowing. Premiere 300 Series Comic Book Boards serves as the premiere economic heavyweight paper for the Strathmore series. The regular textured surface offers the artist a chance for textured etchings and is ideal for pencils and charcoal as well as watercolor.

- **ITEM#BL1057 SRP $25.95**

12 pages per pack

14" x 22" with a 12" x 19" non-photo blue border.

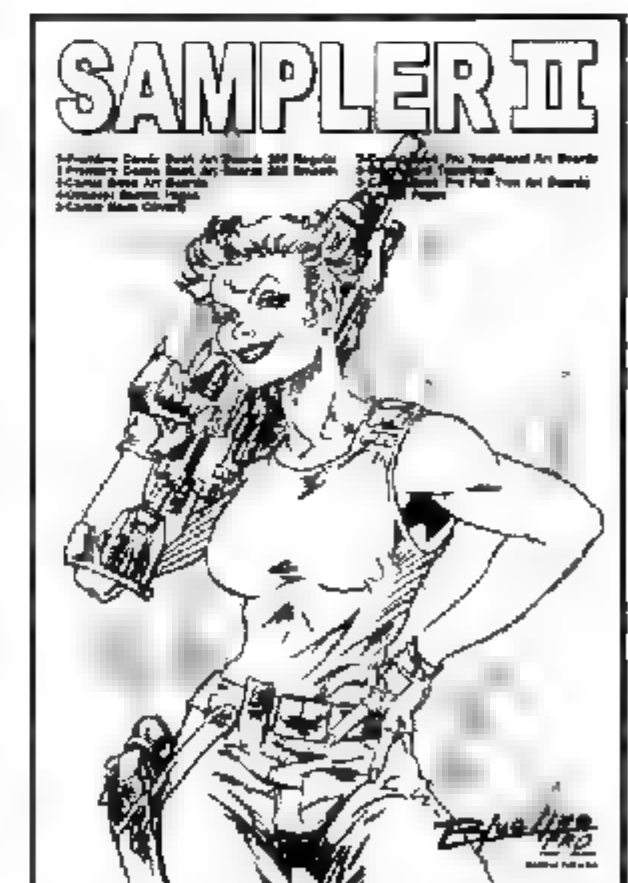**Premiere 300 smooth** (Strathmore)

Over Sized Comic Book Art Boards 12 per pack smooth surface pages (14 x 22) with Traditional Border. Premiere 300 Strathmore Series Smooth is a 100lbs paper preprinted with a non-photo blue border that is the trademark of all Blue Line Pro boards. This allows the artist to draw comics the actual size that professionals do. Professionals draw their illustrations larger then they appear in the finished product. This helps minimize mistakes. The main advantage of Strathmore is its 100% acid free feature. This prevents the signs of aging such as yellowing. Premiere 300 Series Comic Book Boards serves as the premiere economic heavyweight paper for the Strathmore series.

- **ITEM#BL1058 SRP $25.95**

12 pages per pack.

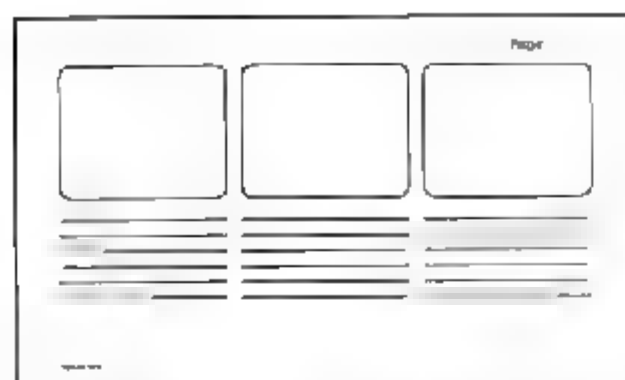14" x 22" with a 12" x 19" non-photo blue border

BLUE LINE SAMPLER II

If you haven't tried Blue Line products, here's your chance! The Blue Line Sampler includes 4-Comic Book Pages, 4-Concept Sketch Pages, 3-Comic Book Cover Sheets, 3- Layout Pages, 3-Pro Comic Book Pages, 3-Storyboard Templates, 3-Full Bleed Pro C.B. Pages, 1- Strathmore 300 smooth, 1- Strathmore 300 regular. All in non-photo blue, of course! That's 25 pages of five different Blue Line products! Check out all Blue Line and Blue Line Pro products in one fell swoop!

- **ITEM# BL1040 SRP $13.95**

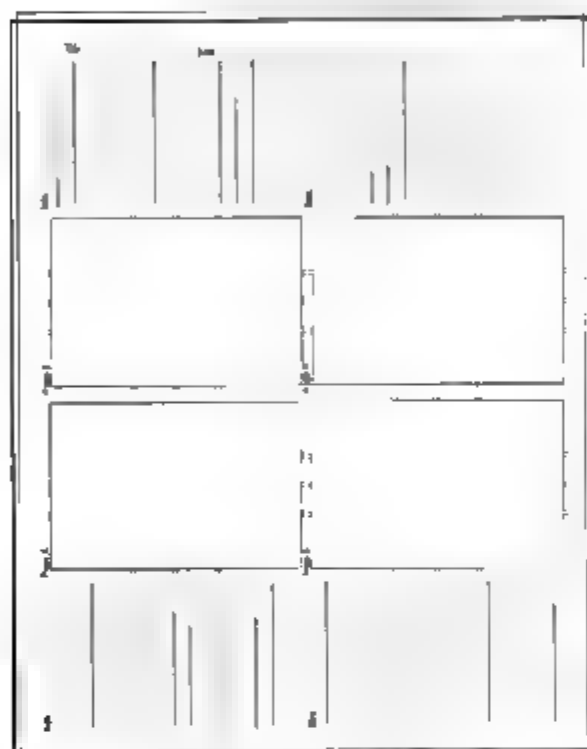25 pages of 8 different Blue Line products

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Animators and Storyboard artist! Blue Line Storyboard Templates offers animators and writers a quick and easy way to show movement and sequences of a story or animation

Storyboard Templates have three large panels with lines below each for detailed art and storytelling.

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100 sheets of 60 lb 8 1/2 x 14 pages with 3 panels padded with colored cover.

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Comic Book Layout Pages uses premium bond paper and printed in non-photo blue, of course, features markings to layout four thumbnails per sheet to detail your comic book page ideas and room for notations and other information.

Used for story boarding your comic book story. A geat tool for artists or writers to work out details for the story along with layouts of pages

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30 8 1/2" x 11" pages printed in non-photo blue/ bagged.

POCKET SKETCH PAD

50 pages of heavy illustration board to carry around in your pocket to have ready when your hit with a revolutionary vision. Great for quick sketches and designs. Featuring Blue Line's quality illustration paper Great for pencilling, inking and washes 50 pages / 5" x 9 1/2" / padded / two-color cover
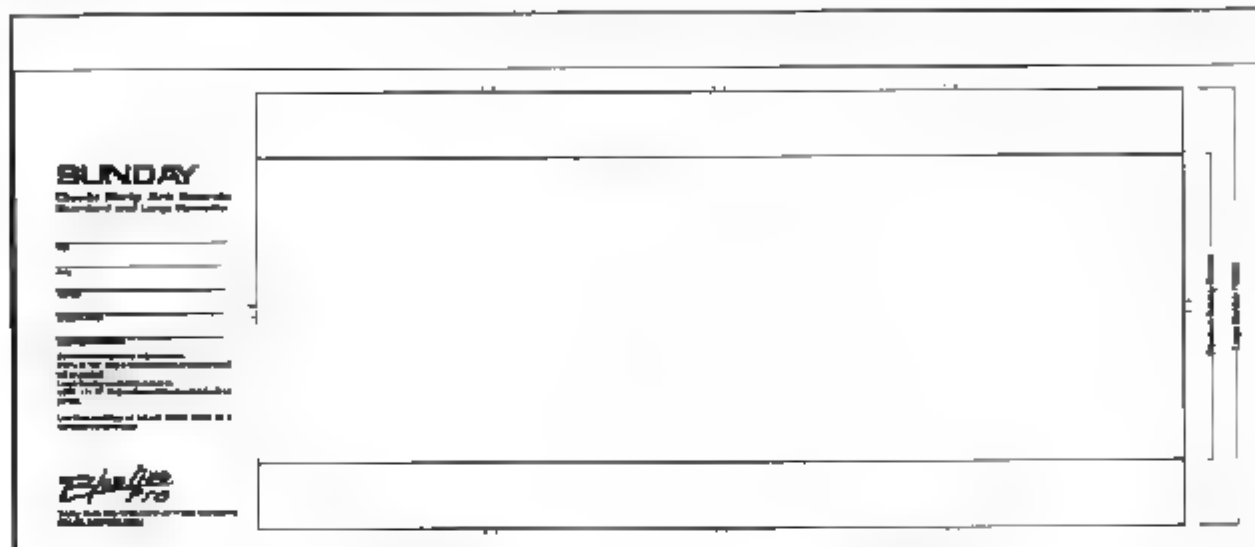
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Blue Line Pro COMIC STRIP ART BOARDS offer comic strip illustrators an easy and time saving way to create professional looking comic strips Printed on Blue Line Pro's Premiere (Strathmore) 300 series smooth with a non-photo blue border. Daily comic strip borders measure 4 1/16" x 13" This offers the illustrator the ability to reduce the original at a 44% reduction to the standard daily strip size. Sunday comic strip borders have two sizes the first is a large format of 5 3/8" x 11 1/2" and the second format of 3 3/4" x 11 1/2". The Sunday strips are drawn at the size they are published and usual have two rows of panels. Each strip offers basic border formats for four and three panels and Sundays allow for additional rows

BLP COMIC STRIP ART BOARDS 12 Daily Comic Strips and 2 Sunday Comic Strips
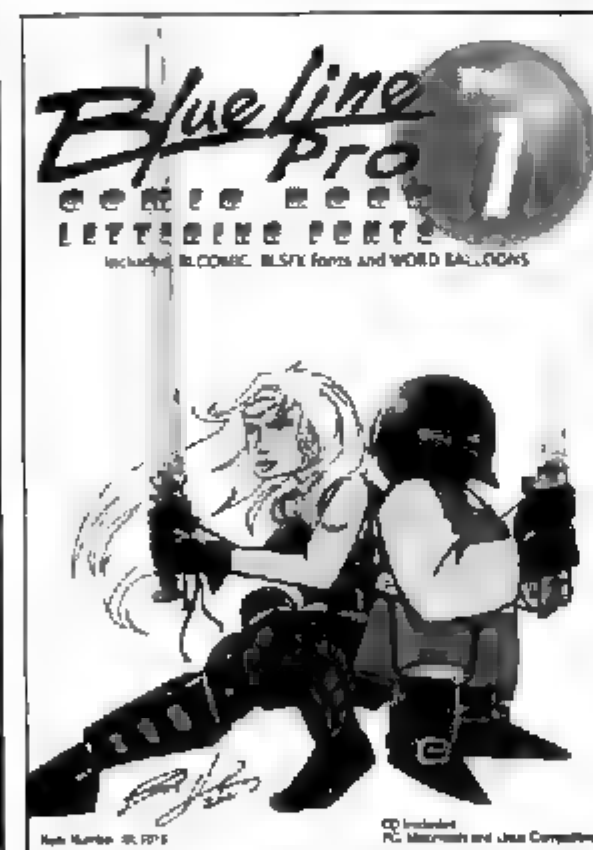
- ITEM # BL1052 *SRP #12.95*

CONCEPT SKETCH PAGES

Record and organize your creative ideas on a convenient, quality art board. Concept Sketch Pages are made from premium index board featuring non-photo blue ink so that the artist can ink his Illustrations on a non-repro surface. Concept Sketch Pages offer an image area for an Illustrator to draw a character scene or anything. And, it also gives room for written information to be included with the artwork. This is handy when a character is designed for a comic book and you want to include his bio, powers, etc., or a Role Playing character you're playing. These pages can easily be hole punched and inserted into a binder. A character template is even included for quick and easy character creations!

- ITEM# BL1004 *SRP $8.95*

25 art pages printed in non-photo blue/ bagged

BLUE LINE COMIC BOOK LETTERING FONT

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
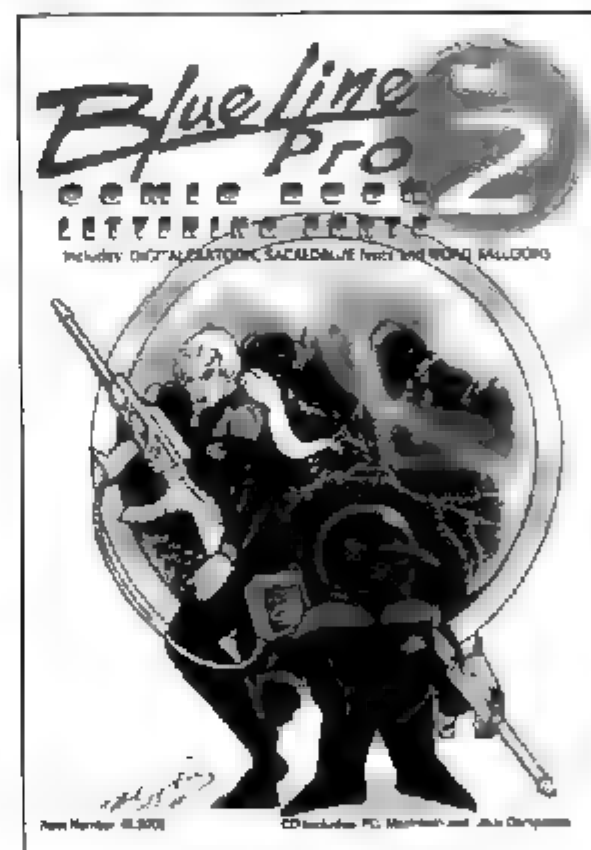*1234567890*

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

BLCOMIC font is formatted for Macintosh and PC Compatibles in a TruType format **BLSFX** is a special effects font with precreated sound effects that are ready for you to drop into place
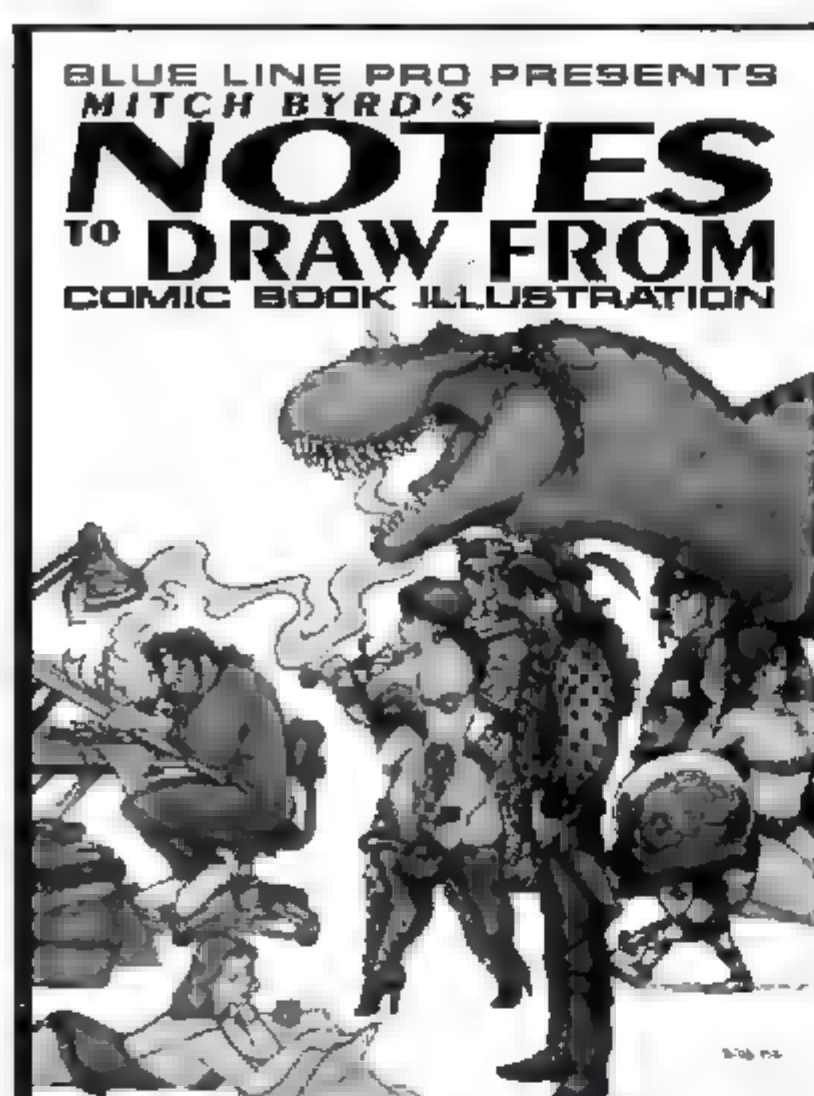
Also included is user configurable word balloons in eps format

Blue Line Pro's Comic Book Font Vol. 1
- ITEM# BL1019 - *SRP $19.95*

FREE Lettering Balloons with each set !

DIGITALCARTOON-Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
Ø123456789!?:,.([]{})/ & +=-
DIGITALCARTOON-Italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
Ø123456789!?:,.([]{})/ & +=-
DIGITALCARTOON-Italic Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
Ø123456789!?:,.([]{})/ & +=-
DIGITALCARTOON-Bold
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SACREDBLUE-Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?:,.('"[]{})/ & +=-
SACREDBLUE-Italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
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BLDIGITALCARTOON and **BLSACREDBLUE** fonts are formatted for Macintosh and PC Compatibles in a TruType format. Also included is user configurable word balloons in eps format.

Blue Line Pro Comic Book Fonts Vol.2
- ITEM# BL2002 - *SRP $19.95*

BLCOMICCREDITS-Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYX
1234567890
Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYX
1234567890
Italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYX
1234567890
Bold Italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYX
1234567890

BLINKERSDELIGHT-Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYX
1234567890
Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYX
1234567890
Italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYX
1234567890
Bold Italic
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BLCOMICCREDITS and **BLINKERDELIGHT** fonts are formatted for Macintosh and PC Compatibles in a TruType format. Also included is user configurable word balloons in eps format

Blue Line Pro Comic Book Fonts Vol.3
- ITEM# BL2003 - *SRP $19.95*

BLUE LINE PRO'S "HOW TO" BOOK SERIES

NOTES TO DRAW FROM
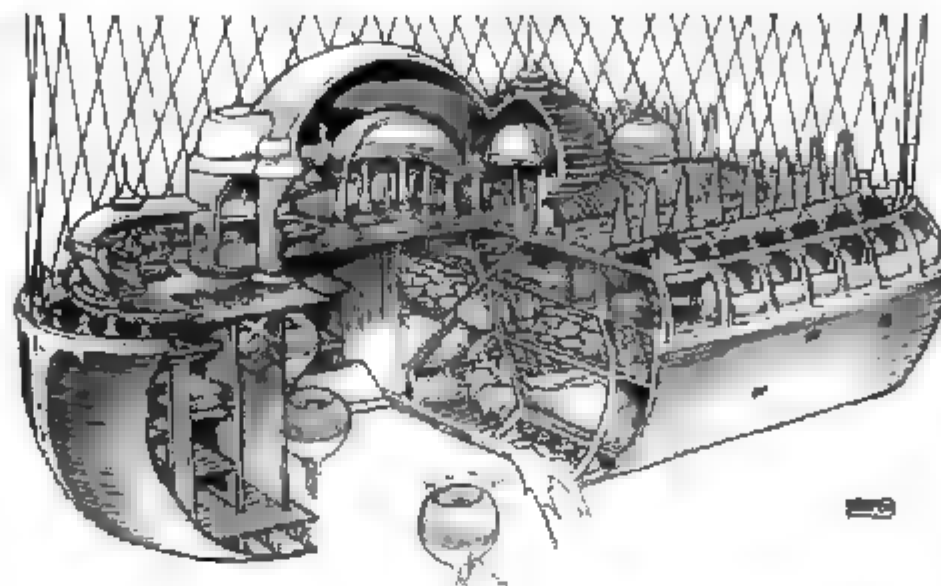## COMIC BOOK ILLUSTRATION

By Mitch Byrd

Mitch Byrd's incredible charming artwork comes to life with this ultimate handbook on illustrating comic concepts. NOTES TO DRAW FROM COMIC BOOK ILLUSTRATION inspired by Byrd's years of professional work and columns in Sketch Magazine, displays the processes and important ideas central to comics such as page layout/composition, character design, perspective, and much more. All this is achieved with complete and precise narratives complimenting step by step visuals that combine to paint a full understanding of comic drawing concepts. 48 pg. full color.

SRP $12.95
ITEM# BL3010

SKETCH BOOK SERIES

Blue Line offers two different sizes of Sketch Books. A Regular 8 1/2" x 11" size and the Traditional 11" x 17" size both are filled with 200 pages of 70 lb. art paper. Both have hard covers with library quality stitch binding for durability and makes it easier to draw without an art table.

DIGITAL COLORS FOR
COMICS

By Aaron Hubrich

Blue Line Pro presents the first in a series of Blue Line Pro "how to" manual books with everything you would ever need to know about digital coloring, and then some. With 48 square-bound full color pages, digital colorist and *Sketch* columnist Aaron Hübrich walks us though the process of digitally coloring from start to finish, providing extensive commentaries and broken down step by steps. In addition, Aaron shows that there is more then one way to color a cat by demonstrating alternative pathways for the same effects.

Full Color 8x10 48pg
SRP $9.95
ITEM# BL3001

DIGITAL COLORS FOR
COMICS
plus CD.

This special edition includes several **extra** features on one easy to use CD. includes ready-to-color high resolution line art that corresponds with the lessons taught in the book, exclusive links to the internet for addition information and updates, and much, much more. CD comes sealed on inside back cover. Compatible with PC and Mac.

Full Color 8x10 48pg. with CD.
SRP $15.95
ITEM# BL3001CD

SKETCH BOOK
REGULAR (8 1/2" x 11")

This standard sized hard covered book offers anyone with the ability to pick up a pencil the opportunity to draw. An artist could create their own library of sketches. Great for when you don't want to carry a sketch board around or your just sitting around with your friends.

Also a good way to collect artist signatures and sketches at conventions!

- Item #BL1010 / 200 pg. Hard cover book
SRP $24.95

SKETCH BOOK
TRADITIONAL   (11" x 17")

This Sketch Book offers the artist the ability to draw the size they're going to draw their original comic book pages
- Item #BL1011 / 200 pg. Hard cover book. *SRP $27.95*

PENCILER AND INKER
STARTING SET

With everything you need to get starting penciling and inking, this is a great set to get anyone interested in illustrating comics well on their way. With the combination of the dependable Blue Line Pro pro art boards and quality art supplies and tools, this set is a sure beat to help your dream become reality. Set contains: 24 sheets of pro comic book pages, 1 8-piece multipurpose compass set (which includes a standard compass, a pencil compass, pencil, eraser, 6" ruler, 45/90 triangle, and a protractor), 1 4-piece geometry set (which includes 5" protractor, 1 12" ruler, 1 large 30/60 triangle, and 1 large 45/90 triangle), 1 large kneaded eraser, 3 non-photo blue pencils, 1 brush (size #1), a 1oz bottle of Higgens black ink, and 1 crow quill #102 inking pen. Sealed in 11x17 Travel Box.
ITEM# BL1055
SRP $38.95

CREATE YOUR OWN
COMIC BOOK!

Blue Line has developed a simple and inexpensive step by step to create your very first comic book, that's fun, easy and comprehensive. A box set of Blue Line products that aid a person in making their own comic! It includes 1 Character Template, 6 Concept Sketch Pages, 6 Comic Book Layout Pages, 24 Comic Book Pages, 1 Comic Book Cover Sheet and a 24 page instructional comic book.

- ITEM# BL1002
SRP $21.95
Box Set. 37 art pages / 24 page b&w instructional comic book / full color die cut box / shrink wrapped.

INDIA INK

• Higgens Black India Ink
A non-clogging ink for lettering pens and brushes. Opaque semi-gloss black finish and waterproof
-*AR-4415* Black Ink (Higgins) 1oz. $3.00
- *AR-EF44011* Black Magic Ink (Higgins) 1oz. $3.50
Higgins Waterproof Black Magic Ink is non-corrosive, free-flowing, and non-clogging. Great for use on tracing vellum and other film surfaces.

• Pelikan Drawing Ink
One of the finest drawing ink available, Pelikan ink is great with technical pens, graphic and fine art papers or tracing cloth
- *AR-PE211862* Black India Ink (Pelikan) 1oz. $4.75
- *AR-PE211169* Black India Ink (Pelikan) 8oz $18.75
• Pelikan "T" Ink
Permanent and completely waterproof. Good with matte-surfaces or waterproof tracing cloth.
- *AR-PE221374* Black Ink Pelikan "T" 1oz. $6.00
• KOH-I-NOOR RAPIDOGRAPH INK
Rapidograph Ink, Black, opaque ink for drafting film, paper, and tracing cloth. For use with Koh-I-Noor Rapidograph Pens.
- *AR-3084-FI* Koh-I-Noor Ink $3.95

• WHITE OUT
FW. Acrylic Artist Waterproof White Ink
Great for use with technical pens, brushes, and dip pens
- *A- R-FW-O11* FW White Acrylic Artist Ink $5.00

BRUSHES
• Winsor/Newton Series 7
Made with Kolinsky sable with traditional black handle. Great brush
- *AR-5007001* Winsor/Newton Series7 Size#1 $18.95
- *AR-5007002* Winsor/Newton Series7 Size#2 $22.95
- *AR-5007003* Winsor/Newton Series7 Size#3 $36.75
Round Brushes
Made with natural Sable with excellent edges and points for precise strokes
- *AR-NB-38-0* Round Brush Size #0 $3.00
- *AR-NB-38-1* Round Brush Size #1 $3.25
- *AR-NB-38-2* Round Brush Size #2 $3.95
- *AR-055009016* Round Brush Size#3 $3.95

RAPHAEL KOLINSKY FULL RIGGER BRUSH (SERIES 8826)
Kolinsky full bellied rigger brushes are great for line work and lettering.
- *AR-SAV25-8826-02* Raphael Size 02 $17.95
- *AR-SAV25-8826-04* Raphael Size 04 $19.95
- *AR-SAV25-8826-06* Raphael Size 06 $22.95
- *AR-SAV25-8826-08* Raphael Size 08 $35.95
- *AR-SAV25-8826-10* Raphael Size 10 $56.95

RAPHAEL RED SABLE ROUND (SERIES 8424)
Kolinsky red-sable round brushes have a fine point and full belly that are great for long thin lines.
-*AR-SAV25-8424-3/0* Size3/0 $7.95
-*AR-SAV25-8424-2/0* Size 2/0 $8.50
-*AR-SAV25-8424-0* Size 0 $8.95
-*AR-SAV25-8424-01* Size 01 $9.95
-*AR-SAV25-8424-02* Size 02 $10.95
-*AR-SAV25-8424-03* Size 03 $11.95
-*AR-SAV25-8424-04* Size 04 $15.95
-*AR-SAV25-8424-05* Size 05 $19.95
-*AR-SAV25-8424-06* Size 06 $24.95
-*AR-SAV25-8424-07* Size 07 $27.95
-*AR-SAV25-8424-08* Size 08 $29.95
-*AR-SAV25-8424-09* Size 09 $33.95
-*AR-SAV25-8424-10* Size 10 $44.95
-*AR-SAV25-8424-12* Size 12 $64.95

RAPHAEL PURE KOLINSKY ROUNDS (SERIES 8404)
Pure Kolinsky round brushes are the Raphael's Flagship brushes. With a fine point and full belly, this brush will hold a high paint load. These brushes have an orange tip handle. Recommended by Tom Lynch.
-*AR-SAV25-8404-6/0* Size6/0 $15.95
-*AR-SAV25-8404-5/0* Size5/0 $15.95
-*AR-SAV25-8404-4/0* Size4/0 $15.95
-*AR-SAV25-8404-3/0* Size3/0 $15.95
-*AR-SAV25-8404-2/0* Size2/0 $16.95
-*AR-SAV25-8404-0* Size 0 $17.95
-*AR-SAV25-8404-01* Size01 $20.95
-*AR-SAV25-8404-02* Size02 $24.95
-*AR-SAV25-8404-03* Size03 $30.95
-*AR-SAV25-8404-04* Size04 $37.95
-*AR-SAV25-8404-0* Size05 $54.95
-*AR-SAV25-8404-06* Size06 $68.95

RAPHAEL KAERELL ROUNDS (SERIES 8394)
Synthetic Kaerell fine tip water media brushes have a soft, fine natural hair feel, yet are more economically prices
-*AR-SAV25-8394-3/0* Size 3/0 $5.95
-*AR-SAV25-8394-2/0* Size 2/0 $6.50
-*AR-SAV25-8394-0* Size 0 $6.95
-*AR-SAV25-8394-01* Size 01 $6.95
-*AR-SAV25-8394-02* Size 02 $6.95
-*AR-SAV25-8394-03* Size 03 $7.95
-*AR-SAV25-8394-04* Size 04 $8.50
-*AR-SAV25-8394-05* Size 05 $9.95
-*AR-SAV25-8394-06* Size 06 $9.95
-*AR-SAV25-8394-07* Size 07 $12.95
-*AR-SAV25-8394-08* Size 08 $13.95
-*AR-SAV25-8394-10* Size 10 $14.95
-*AR-SAV25-8394-12* Size 12 $19.95

RAPHAEL PEN HOLDERS
Raphael's universal penholders will hold all nibs. Their contoured, tapered handles are comfortable to hold and elegant to look at. Available in a variety of woods. Synthetic Kaerell fine tip water media brushes have a soft, fine natural hair feel, yet are more economically prices.
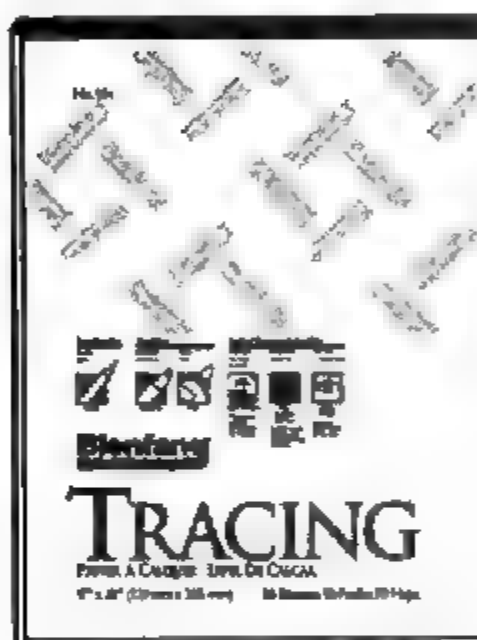
- **AR-SAV23-3305** Black Lacquer $8.95

- **AR-SAV23-3300** Natural Wood $6.95
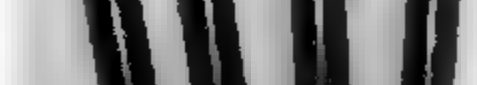
- **AR-SAV23-3315** Stained Wood $5.95

- **AR-SAV23-7002BL** Student Pen Holder - Blue $3.95
-**AR-SAV23-7002GR** Student Pen Holder - Green $3.95
-**AR-SAV23-7002NA** Student Pen Holder –Natural $3.95
- **AR-SAV23-7002RD** Student Pen Holder - Red $3.95

• Tracing Paper
The 504 Tracing Paper has excellent transparency and tooth. It is used for rough sketches and overlays. Fine surface is ideal for pencil, markers and inks.
- *AR-HUN-243-123* (9"x12") 50 Sheets $4.95
- *AR-HUN-243-131* (11"x14") 50 Sheets $6.95
- *AR-HUN-243-143* (14"x17") 50 Sheets $9.95
- *AR-HUN0243-163* (19"x24") 50 Sheets $17.95

FABER-CASTELL 4 PEN SET
Set includes 4 nibs S, F, M, and brush
-*AR-FC167100*
SRP $9.00

PENCILS & QUILL PENS
• Non-Photo Blue Pencil
Makes marks not appear when artwork is reproduced. Very useful.
- *AR-761-5* Non-photo Blue Pencil $.60

• Quill Inking Pen
Quill Pens offers super-fine flexible point.
- *AR-H9432* Quill Inking Pen #102 (Tip & Holder) $3.25
- *AR-H9402* 12 Crow Quill #102 Tips (Inking Pen Nibs only) $13.95

ERASERS
• Kneaded Eraser
Gray soft bendable eraser used for pencil and charcoal.
- *AR-1224* Kneaded Rubber Eraser Large $1.15

• Eraser Pencils
Peel off wrap ideal for detail erasing
- *AR-400* Eraser Pencils $1.15
• Erasing Shield
Metal shield with different sizes and shapes
- *AR-FT-5370* Erasing Shield $1.10

PENCIL SHARPNER
Canister Sharpener offers metal blades with high impact plastic container
- *AR-MR906* Canister Sharper $3.95

• ALVIN PENSTIX
Graphic waterproof drawing pen offering India ink density. Black permanent drawing ink.
- *AR-4013-EEF* 0.3mm $1.55
- *AR-4017-F* 0.7mm $1.55
- *AR-4015-EF* 0.5mm $1.55
• Penstix Set
Includes all 3 Pentrix Sizes
- *AR-4033* 3mm, 7mm, 5mm $4.45

• SAKURA PIGMA BRUSH
Archival performance with flexible brush style nib. Very fine lines or broad strokes. Water/chem. proof + fade resistant.
- *AR-XSDK-BR-49* Black $3.00
• Sakura Pigma Micron
Available in six point sizes Waterproof, chemical proof and fade resistant and will not smear or feather when dry
-*AR-XSK005-49* 20mm black $2.95
-*AR-XSK01-49* 25mm black $2.95
-*AR-XSK02-49* 30mm black $2.95
-*AR-XSK03-49* 35mm, black $2.95
-*AR-XSK05-49* 45mm, black $2.95
-*AR-XSK08-49* 50mm, black $2.95
-*AR-30061* 3-pk, 25, 35, 45 $8.00
-*AR-30062* All sizes, black $16.00

KOH-I-NOOR RAPIDOGRAPH PENS
Rapidograph Pens are made of impact and chemical-resistant components for drawing and specialty inks. Good balance and self-polishing stainless steel points. (Tech Pens)
-*AR-3165-06/0* Size 6x0 (.13mm) $27.00
-*AR-3165-04/0* Size 4x0 (.18mm) $27.00
-*AR-3165-03/0* T Size 3x0 (.25mm, $22.00
-*AR-3165-02/0* Size 2x0 (.3mm) $22.00
-*AR-3165-01/0* Size #0 (.35mm) $22.00
-*AR-3165-01* Size #1 (.5mm) $22.00
-*AR-3165-02* Size #2 (.6mm) $22.00
-*AR-3165-03* Size #3 (.8mm) $22.00
-*AR-3165-04* Size #4 (1mm) $22.00
-*AR-3165-06* Size #6 (1.4mm) $22.00
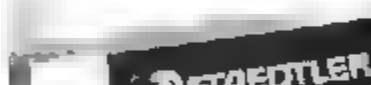-*AR-3165-07* Size #7 (2mm) $22.00

• Magic-Rub Eraser
Eraser especially developed for sensitive surfaces, will not mark of smudge.
-*AR-1954FC-1* Magic-Rub Eraser $.95

• Pentel Clic
Pen style holder, retract as needed.
- *AR-ZE-21C* Pentel Clic Eraser/ Holder$1.95
- *AR-ZER-2* Pentel Refill Erasers $1.75

Mars Plastic Eraser
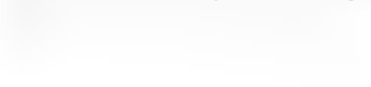- *AR-STD526-50* $1.00

• Penstix Drawing/Sketching Markers
Offers maximum India drawing ink like density. Black waterproof permanent ink.
- *AR-3013-EEF* 0.3mm ExEx Fine $1.55
- *AR-3015-EF* 0.5mm Ex Fine $1.55
- *AR-3017-F* 0.7mm Fine $1.55
• Pentrix Drawing/Sketching Marker Set
Set of all 3 sizes.
- *AR-3033* Set of 3 .3,.5,.7 mm $4.45

ALVIN DRAWING PEN/ MARKERS
• Tech-Liner Super Point Drawing Pen/Markers
Permanent waterproof ink that dries instantly. Nibs set in stainless steel sleeves for protection
- *AR-TL01* 0.1mm $1.95
- *AR-TL02* 0.2mm $1.95
- *AR-TL03* 0.3mm $1.95
- *AR-TL04* 0.4mm $1.95
- *AR-TL05* 0.5mm $1.95

Tech-Liner Super Point Drawing Pen/Markers Sets
- *AR-TLP6* set of 5 All above $9.50
- *AR-TLP3* set-3 (.1, .3, .5mm) $5.75

MECHANICAL PENCIL

Berol Mechanical Pencil is precision made w/button lead release and light aluminum barrel

- Mechanical Pencil 2mm.
- *AR-BP10C* $6.95
- 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. HB
- *AR-BP2375-HB* $10.50
- 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. 2H
- *AR-BP2375-2H* $10.50
- 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. 2B
- *AR-SA02263-2B* $10.50
- 12-Non-Photo Blue Leads-2mm.
- *AR-BP2376-NPB* $10.50

• Mechanical Pencil Sharpener
Provides professional point for standard leads
- *AR-BP14C* Pencil Sharpener (Mech. Pencil) $10.75

• Sandpaper Pointer
Idea for pointing pencils, leads, charcoal and crayons by hand.
-*AR-3435-1* Sandpaper Pointer $.95

• Blending Stumps
Soft paper felt with double pointed ends used for blending charcoal, pastels, etc. Use sandpaper to repoint.

-AR-T811-1	¼" x 5 ¼"	$.50
-AR-T812-1	5/16" x 6"	$.75
-AR-T813-1	13/32" x 6"	$1.00
-AR-T814-1	15/32" x 6"	$1.25
-AR-T817-1	5/8" x 6"	$1.50

• SHARPIE MARKERS
Permanent markers with high intensity ink. Quick drying
- *AR-SA37101* Ultr-Fine Black $1.30
- *AR-SA35101* Ex-Fine Black $1.30
- *AR-SA30101* Regular Black $1.30
- *AR-SA33101* Super Sharpie $1.95

• METALLIC PENS
Offers high quality metallic ink. Great for autographs.
- *AR-SA46115* Gold Pen $4.50
- *AR-SA46120* Silver Pen $4.50

• CHINA MARKING PENCILS
Offers moisture resistant, non-toxic, odor-free pigments. Self Sharpening. Offered as a dozen or singles.
AR-173T Dozen Black $10.75

AR-173T-1	Single Black	$.95
AR-164T	Dozen White	$10.75
AR-164T-1	Single White	$.95

• DRAFTSMAN BRUSH
Removes shavings from paper. Cleaning without fear of smudging
- Draftsman Brush (cleaning paper)
- *AR-FT5391* $6.00

XACTO KNIFE
Rubberized barrel. Rear-release mechanism with safety cap.
- Xacto Knife
- *AR-XA3626* $5.25
Xacto Refill Blades #1
- *AR-OLKB* $6.50

• Palette Tray
7" by 5" plastic tray works excellent for holding inks.
AR-CW161 SRP $1.95

• WORKABLE FIXATIF (Krylon)
Provides lasting protection. Prevents smudging, dusting and wrinkling.
- *AR-KR1306* $8.95

RUBBER CEMENT
Contact adhesive for paste-up and other graphic art uses.
- Rubber Cement 4oz.
- *AR-BT138* $3.50
- Rubber Cement Quart
- *AR-BT102* $13.25
- Rubber Cement Thinner Pint
- *AR-BT201* $8.50
- Rubber Cement Pick-Up (eraser)
- *AR-BT700* $1.50

T-SQUARES
• Plastic T-squares offering flexible plastic with both metric and standard measurements
- AR-HX02   Plastic 12" $3.95
- AR-NBA18 Plastic 18" $7.95
- AR-NBA24 Plastic 24" $10.95
• Aluminum T-squares offering hard tempered aluminum blade riveted to a rugged plastic head
- AR-FR63-112 Alum. 12" $10.95
- AR-FR63-118 Alum. 18" $12.95
- AR-FR63-124 Alum. 24" $13.95

TRIANGLES
High quality triangles made of .080" acrylic. Raised inking edges. Great for inkers.
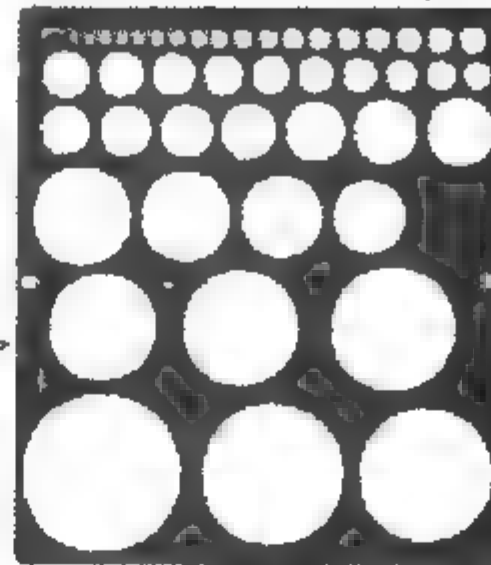■ 30" x 60"W/ Inking Edge
- *AR-1204-60* Triangle - 30"x60" 4 inch $3.50
- *AR-1206-60* Triangle 30"x60" 6 inch $4.50
- *AR-1208-60* Triangle - 30"x60" 8 inch $5.50
- *AR-1210-60* Triangle - 30"x60" 10 inch $6.50
- *AR-1212-60* Triangle 30"x60" 12 inch $8.50
- *AR-1214-60* Triangle 30"x60" 14 inch $10.50

■ 45" X 90"W/ Inking Edge
- *AR-1204-45* Triangle - 45"x90" 4 inch $4.50
- *AR-1206-45* Triangle 45"x90" 6 inch $5.50
- *AR-1208-45* Triangle - 45"x90" 8 inch $7.50
- *AR-1210-45* Triangle - 45"x90" 10 inch $9.50
- *AR-1212-45* Triangle - 45"x90" 12 inch $13.50

COMPASS SET
Geometry set includes ruler, compass, two triangles, protractor, eraser, and sharpener
• 8-piece Geometry Set
- *AR-HX18807* $4.95
• 8-Piece Geometry Set (brass compass)
- *AR-723405* $7.95
• Basic Geometry Set
4-piece Geometry Set (Ruler, 12 protractor, 30/60 + 45/90 triangles)
- *AR-FL03* $5.95
• Basic Combination Compass
6-piece compass set: side-screw bow compass, knee joint compass, extension bar, spare leads, 2" divider point and a lead pointer
- *AR-S61* Set $15.95
• Compass Set
6-piece drawing set contains: Small side screw compass, 5 ½" self-centering knee joint compass/divider, extension bar, technical pen adapter, divider point and lead pointer

Brush Box
This 12" by 4" by 1 ½" sturdy wooden box protects your valuable brushes and pens
AR-YK23000 SRP $7.95

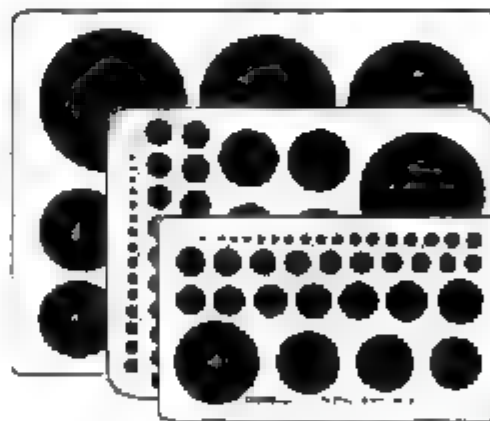-*APHLX01330-01330* Set $16.95

CIRCLE TEMPLATES / FRENCH CURVES / ELLIPSE TEMPLATES
• Circle Templates
Metric and standard. Risers for smear-free drawing (Great for Inkers)
• Large Circles
- *AR-13001* $7.95
• Extra Large Circles
- *AR-13011* $6.95

• French Curves (Inking Edge)
- *AR-9000* Set $6.95
• Ellipse Temps.
- *AR-PK12691* $12.00

• Circle Templates Set of 3
This set of 3 templates provides ninety-eight different circles and edge scales in 50th 16th and 10th as well as mm and centering lines. Sizes ranging from 1/32 inches to 3 ½ inches
- ITEM #AR-TD404 SRP $17.95
• Ellipse Template
-*AR-PK12691* $12.00

RULERS
• Steinless Steel Rulers offering flexible steel with non-skid cork backing.
- AR-200-12 Steel Ruler 12 inch Cork Backing $5.95
- AR-200-18 Steel Ruler 18 inch Cork Backing $6.95
• Plastic Ruler 1 inch with 1/16" markings and metric markings
- AR-C36 Ruler 12" (plastic ruler) $1.25
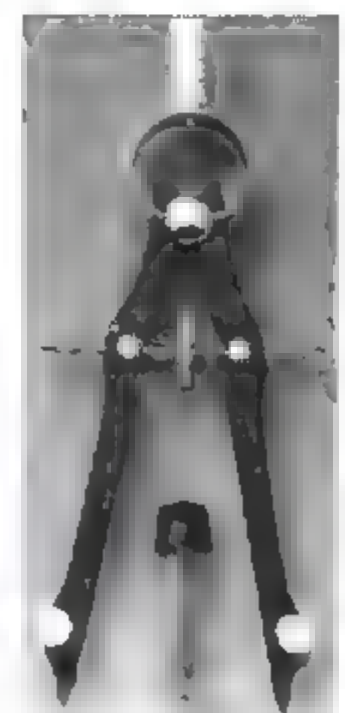- AR-18 Ruler 6" (plastic ruler) $.50

• POCKET PORTFOLIO
- AR-FL419WH Pocket Portfolio 14 x 20 $10.50

STORAGE BOXES
• Sketch Pac 2-sided safe storing box 12 3/8" x 4 ½" x 1 ¾"
- *AR-6880AB* $12.95

• One Tray Art Bins 13" x 7 ¼" x 5 ¾". Elevated tray for viewing of supplies in bottom bin. Tight Latch
-*AR-6843AC* black $15.25

• 5" Bow Compass & Divider
An all metal construction compass with replaceable needle and lead. Makes accurate 8" diameter circles. Extra pivot point for use as a divider.
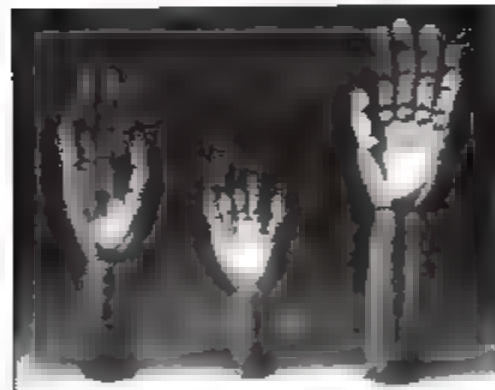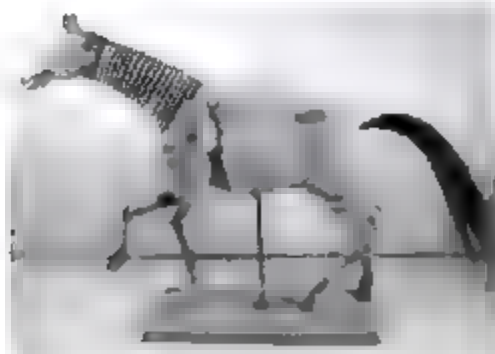-*AR-494* 5" Bow Compass $4.95

Wooden Mannequins

Great for modeling proportions and poses at any angle. Made from carved hardwood.
- **AR-CLY9037** 6" Male
  SRP $12.95
- **AR-CLY9036** 6" Female
  SRP $12.95
- **AR-CLY9020** 12" Male
  SRP $19.95
- **AR-CLY9019** 12" Female
  SRP $19.95
- **AR-CLY9042** 20" Male
  SRP. $29.95

• **12" Unisex Wooden Mannequin**
Human Adult figure mannequin with perfect proportions, adjustable joints for posing. Great for modeling proportions involving angles. Made from carved hardwood, 12" in height.
- **AR-CW201** 12" Model   **SRP** $19.95

• **Hand Mannequins**
Life-like hardwood hand mannequins are fully articulated. Comes in three sizes: male, female and child.
- **AR-HM3** 14" Male Hand
  SRP $49.95
- **AR-HM4** 12" Female Hand
  SRP $46.95
- **AR-HM5** 9" Child Hand
  SRP $42.95

• **12" Horse Wooden Manikan**
- **AR033090410**
  SRP $99.00

• **12" Lizard Wooden Mannequin**
- **AR056090440**
  SRP $17.99

• PRESENTATION CASES (PORTFOLIO)

Spine mounted handle allows pages to hang properly to avoid wrinkling. Features 1" black super or quality rings (Does not snag pages) Includes 10 archival pages (#ZX)
- **AR-S1-2171** 17" x 14"
  SRP $68.95
- **AR-S1-2241** 24" x 18"
  SRP $110.50
Refill Pages for Presentation Case
- **AR-ZX17** 17" x 14" 10 pack
  SRP $23.95
- **AR-ZX24** 24" x 18" 10 pack
  SRP $45.95

ELECTRIC ERASER and REFILLS

• KOH-I-NOOR ELECTRIC ERASER

Designed to erase both lead and ink from paper and film. Features a heavy-duty, maintenance free 115v motor, protected by a high-impact white LEXAN case. Maximum efficiency with either the No. 287 white vinyl strip eraser for paper or the specially formulated no. 285 imbibed yellow strip eraser for film. Includes a No. 287 strip eraser
- **AR-2800E** All purpose Electric System
  SRP $73.95

• CORDLESS/RECHARGEABLE ERASER

Contains a trouble-free motor that delivers up to 4,500 rpm, fully charged. Versatile two-way operation—cordless or AC. Long lasting rechargeable battery, break resistant LEXAN case. Lightweight portable recharging stand power pack, plus a No. 287 vinyl strip eraser.
- **AR-2850C** Cordless Rechargeable
  SRP $96.95

• KOH-I-NOOR ERASER REFILLS
- **AR-ER285** Yellow Imbibed, ink 10/box
  SRP $6.95
- **AR-ER287** Soft Vinyl pencil, 10/box
  SRP $5.95

• LIGHTWEIGHT SKETCH BOARDS
Made of strong, tempered masonite with cutout carry handle. Metal clips and rubber band (included) hold paper securely in place
- **AR-SB1819** 18 ½" X 19 ½"
  SRP $9.95
- **AR-SB2326** 23 ½" X 26"
  SRP $12.95

• ALVIN ELECTRIC ERASER
Durable, high-quality UL-listed unit. Uses of a full 7" eraser eliminates the annoyance of stopping constantly during heavy workload periods to insert short erasers. Unbreakable LEXAN casing fits the hand comfortably and can be hung by a convenient ring. The heavy duty AC motor eliminates the continual repair problems of typical lightweight erasers. Motor cooling vent locations are designed to allow cool operation even under heaviest workloads.
- **AR-EE1754** With slip-chuck
  SRP $85.00

• ERASER REFILLS
- **AR-ER72** 7" dark grey, ink, 1 doz.
  SRP $6.95
- **AR-ER73** 7" white, pencil, 1 doz.
  SRP $6.95
- **AR-ER74** 7" pink, pencil, 1 doz.
  SRP $6.95
- **AR-ER88** 7" white vinyl, ink/pencil, 1 doz.
  SRP $6.95

Satin-Glow Lightboxes
Great for transferring drawings onto art boards.
- **AR-LB1218** 12" x 18" $205.00
- **AR-LB1620** 16" x 20" $325.00
- **AR-LB1824** 18" x 24" $485.00

• DISPLAY PORTFOLIOS ARTFOLIOS
24 pages of acid, pvc, and lignen safe art sleeves. Archival Safe.
- *AR-IA1212* Artfolio Book 11 x 17 w/ 24 shts SRP $15.95
(Holds Blue Line Comic Book Art Boards)
- *AR-IA 1214* Artfolio book 14 x 17 w/ 24 shts SRP $25.95
(Holds most oversized art boards)
- *AR-IA 128* Artfolio book 8 1/2 x 11 w/ 24 shts SRP $7.50

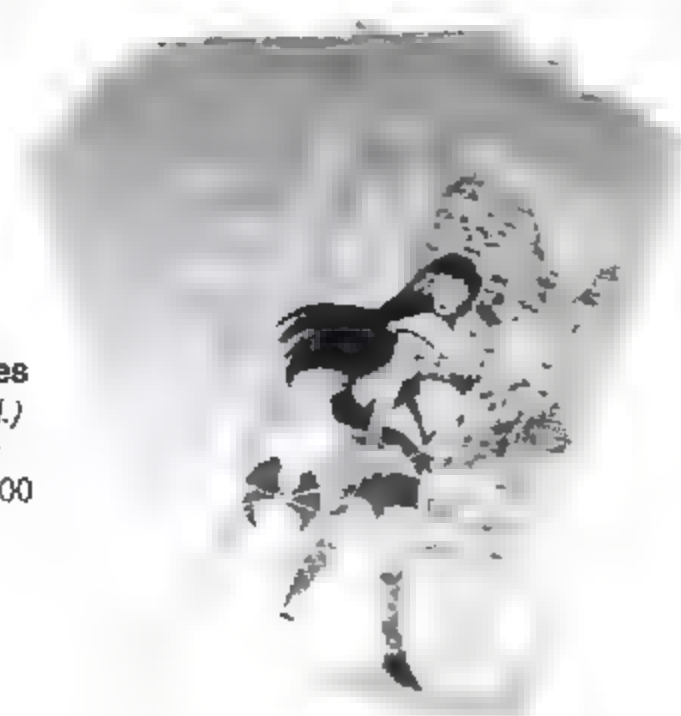## ARCHIEVABLE SAFE SUPPLIES for ORIGINAL ARTWORK

Blue Line Pro now carries B.C.E archievable-safe supplies. When a portfolio or art sleeve isn't enough to protect your prints, posters, of original artwork, then try Protective Artwork Sheets. These sheets are made of rigid plastic mylar material. In addition, backing boards that easily slide into the slip of the sleeves are available. These sheets come in two different sizes (12 ½" x 18 ½" and 18" x 24") and are available in a multitude of quantities, a perfect fit for most Blue Line Pro comic boards. Be on the look out for more B.C.E supplies in the future from Blue Line Pro.

Mylar Sleeve		Backing Board	
(1) 12 ½" x 18 ½"		(1) 12 ¼" x 18 ¼"	
-AR-BCE70-1	$4.95	-AR-BCE41-1	$1.55
Mylar Sleeve		Backing Board (1)	
(1) 18" x 24"		17 ½" x 23 ½"	
-AR-BCE75-1	$6.00	-AR-BCE42-1	$2.75
Mylar Sleeves		Backing Board	
(10-pack) of 12 ½" x 18 ½"		(10-pack) of 12" x 18"	
-AR-BCE70-10	$40.00	-AR-BCE41-10	$12.40
Mylar Sleeves		Backing Board	
(10-pack) of 18" x 24"		(10-pack) of 17 ½" x 23 ½"	
-AR-BCE75-10	$48.00	-AR-BCE42-10	$19.50
Mylar Sleeves		Backing Board	
(25-pack) of 12 ½" x 18 ½"		(25-pack) of 12" x 18"	
-AR-BCE70-25	$90.00	-AR-BCE41-25	$28.00
Mylar Sleeves		Backing Board	
(25 pack) of 18" x 24"		(25-pack) of 17 ½" x 23 ½"	
-AR-BCE75-25	$115.00	-AR-BCE42-25	$45.50

COMIC BOOK ORIGINAL ART SLEEVES
Protect your original Art Work
• **Comic Book Original Art Sleeves**
11 ½" x 19" Polyethylene (3.0 mil.)
- *AR-BAG 1119-25* 25 Bags $7.50
- *AR-BAG 1119-100* 100 Bag $25.00

BLUE LINE PRO COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Exclusively designed for the Computer Artist!

Entry Level Graphics WorkStation

Powerful performance from an Intel Celeron entry-level workstation. Get a solid start with digital graphics, design, publishing and other home computer needs.

Intel Celeron processor up to 2.0GHz. Blazing fast 400MHz FSB and 128 Cache.

Starting with a minimum of 128MB memory, 20GB hard drive, CD Rom drive, floppy drive, network connection, 56K modem, sound, video, speakers, keyboard, and mouse. APC surge protection included.

17" Multimedia monitor .23dp x .27dp 110Mhz pixel frequency. Windows XP Home Installed
Starting at $795

Advanced Level Graphics WorkStation

Scalability and advanced Intel Pentium 4 power in a feature rich workstation. Perform professional digital video editing, graphics, design, and engineering.

Intel Pentium 4 processor starting at 1.8GHz. Blazing fast 400 or 533MHz FSB and 256K or 512K Cache.

Starting with a minimum of 512MB memory, 80GB hard drive, CD Rom drive, CDRW/DVD drive, floppy drive, network connection, 56K modem, sound, video, stereo speaker system, keyboard, and mouse. APC surge suppression included.

17" Multimedia monitor .23dp x .27dp 110Mhz pixel frequency. Windows XP Home Installed.
Starting at $1559

Professional Series Graphic Artist Machine

Extreme performance and scalability with the advanced Intel Pentium 4 processor. The high level performance to drive digital video editing, 3D graphics rendering, CAD/CAM design, and other resource demanding workstation applications. (Dual processor workstations available)

Intel Pentium 4 processor starting at 2.26GHz Blazing fast 533MHz FSB and 512K Cache.

Starting with a minimum of 1GB memory, Dual 120GB hard drives, CD Rom drive, DVD+RW drive, floppy drive, GeForce Video w/128MB, network connection, 56K modem, sound, surround sound speaker system keyboard, and mouse. APC UPS power backup included.

19" Multimedia monitor 200 Mhz pixel frequency Windows XP Home Installed
Starting at $3325

Hardware is constantly changing. As better equipment becomes available, the systems as stated will be upgraded automatically. For exact system specifications, please contact us.

SMOOTH NIB, SUPERIOR INK FLOW

CARTRIDGE FILLING SYSTEM

Software...

TACHIKAWA NEW MANGA PEN

All the way from Japan the Manga Fountain Pen from Tachikawa is an incredible new art pen that will revolutionize inking as we know it! The fountain pen quality makes this a precision instrument featuring a chromium-plated stainless steel 0.2mm nib making it impervious to rust or corrosion. In addition the waterproof black ink is fed through a sophisticated cartridge filler system that resists the usual cartridge-based problem of ink flow and skipping (dry start when the pen touches paper). This pen is the superior choice for the discriminating manga or comic artist. The key is in the simple and elegant design.
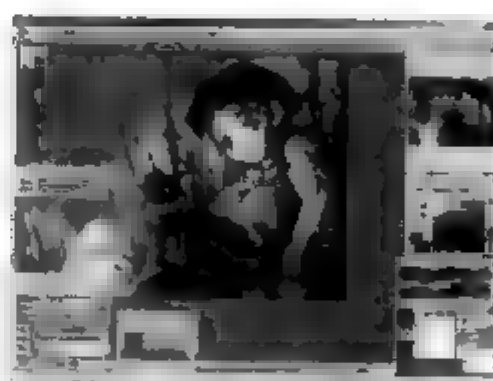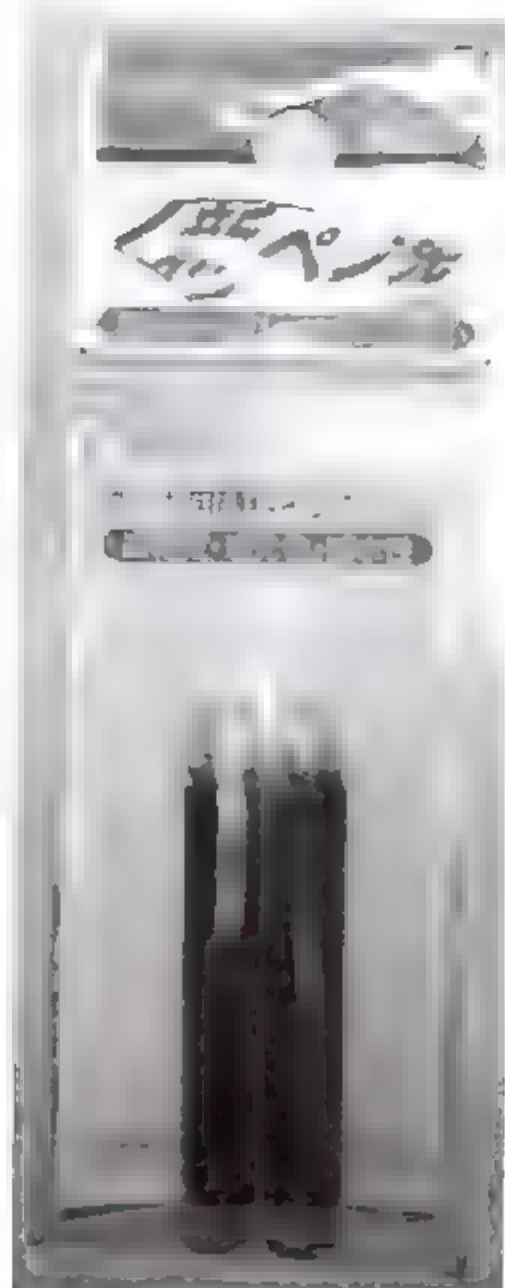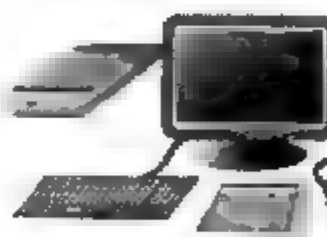
-ARIC-302834 $4.95

■ 50 example art images are included, with an event option that lets the viewer see how they were made
■ Watercolors, ink brush, air brush, the pen tools features many types of effects
■ The CG-illust website is full of artwork
■ All the tools you need to create 2D artwork at this reasonable price
■ Poster or card making is easy with the font tool!
■ High resolution allows for top quality print outs
■ Images can be saved in BMP and JPEG formats.
■ Great for creating images for a homepage.

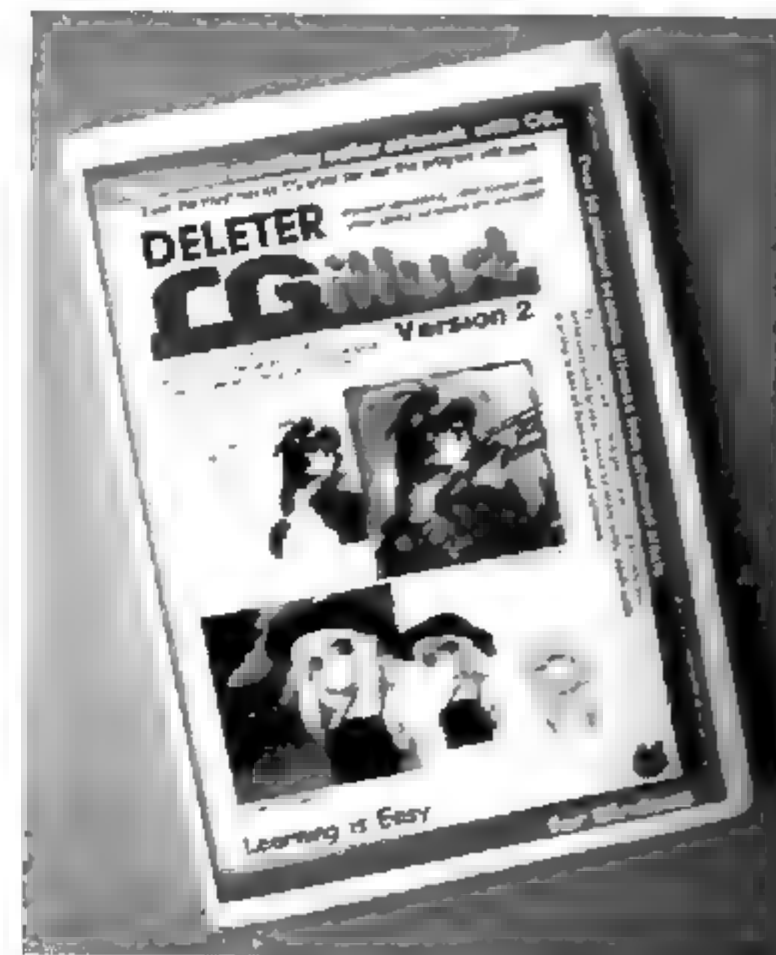Compatible with a scanner or digital camera.

Extensive print setup.

Compatible with pressure sensitive tablets.

Deleter DG Illust version 2

50 example art images are included, with an event option that lets the viewer see how they were made. Watercolors, ink brush, air brush, etc the pen tools features many types of effects. All the tools you need to create 2D artwork at this reasonable price. Poster or card making is easy with the font tool. High resolution allows for top quality print outs. Images can be saved in BMP or JPEG formats. Easy to use tools.

-SWDELCG2 $79.95

TACHIKAWA NEW MANGA PEN CARTRIDGE REFILLS

(2-pack)
-ARIC-NC20B $2.95

DELETER
CGillust
Version 2

Learning is Easy

COPIC MARKERS, AIR MARKERS, TONES, REFILLS

COPIC Markers have been widely used in Europe and Asia where their coloring qualities go hand in hand with the style we know as manga. Their versatility and variety lends itself to the imagination of the creator and gives him or her options for their creative style. The standard square designed COPIC marker is double-ended and fast drying. COPICs have been specially formulated with a toner designed not to dissolve making them able to work directly onto photocopied surfaces and provide clear unblemished color. One of the best parts about COPIC markers is their refillable ink and replaceable nib features.

• SINGLE BASIC MARKERS
- $4.95 each

All Single Colors Available on-line at www.bluelinepro.com or call 859-282-0096

• COPIC MARKER SETS

AR-COP110 COPIC 12 Basic	$59.40
AR-COP112 COPIC 12 PCS NG	$59.40
AR-COP114 COPIC 12 PCS TG	$59.40
AR-COP116 COPIC 12 PCS WG	$59.40
AR-COP118 COPIC 12 PCS CG	$59.40
AR-COP120 COPIC 36 Color Set	$178.20
AR-COP140 Copic 72 Color Set A	$356.40
AR-COP150 Copic 72 Color Set B	$356.40
AR-COP155 Copic 72 Color Set C	$356.40
AR-COP160 Copic Empty Marker	$3.60

• COPIC Various Ink (Refills) $5.95
200 SERIES One of the best parts about COPIC markers standard and sketch is their refillable ink feature. No more tossing out dried out markers. Just fill it back up again and you're ready to go. Refills can be used up six times. This refillable feature gives you the opportunity to make your own color though mixing inks, creating an original color all your own.

All Single Colors Available on-line at www.bluelinepro.com or call 859-282-0096

AR-COP210 Var Ink Colorless Blender $3.75
AR-COP220 Var Colorless Blender200c $9.75
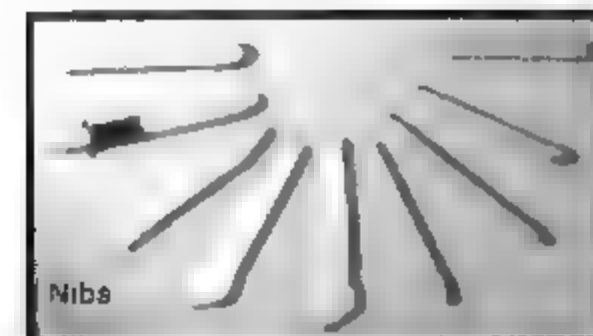AR-COP230 Var Ink Empty Bottle $2.65

• REFILL BOOSTER PACK
AR-COP-BOOSTER 3-caps w/needles $4.95

• Replacable Marker Nibs $4.20
Another great feature about COPIC makers is there interchangeable nibs. From broad to calligraphy - provide greater freedom of technique in your renderings. COPIC Nibs deliver clear vibrant color on photocopied surfaces as well as glass plastics and metals. The nibs are made of strong but flexible polyester for smooth consistent application. Nibs come in a pack of 10 except for the brush variety that comes in a pack of three.

AR-COP300 Standard Broad	$4.20
AR-COP310 Soft Broad	$4.20
AR-COP320 Round	$4.20
AR-COP330 Calligraphy 5mm	$4.20
AR-COP340 Brush	$4.20
AR-COP350 Standard Fine	$4.20
AR-COP360 Super Fine	$4.20
AR-COP370 Semi Broad	$4.20
AR-COP380 Calligraphy 3mm	$4.20
AR-COP385 Sketch Nib Super	$4.20
AR-COP90 Sketch Nib Med	$4.20

Nibs

• 400 Copic Tweezer $4.20
Our special COPIC Tweezers give you an easy no-mess nib change that gets you drawing again in minutes. Being able to change nibs quickly helps you keep up with the most demanding marker techniques.
AR-COP400 Tweezer $4.20

• SINGLE SKETCH MARKERS $4.95
The oval designed Sketch COPIC marker is double-ended and is fast drying. COPICs have been specially formulated with a toner designed not to dissolve making them able to work directly onto photocopied surfaces and provide clear unblemished color. COPIC Sketch markers' oval body profile gives you a feel of a fast flowing experience in your hands. It paints as well as it draws. They come with a broad nib and a brush like nib, available in medium + broad and super brush making them great for delicate or bold expression (from fashion and graphics to textiles and fine arts lettering/calligraphy) COPIC sketch markers are available in 286 colors. One of the best parts about COPIC markers is their refillable ink and replaceable nib features.

• Single COPIC SKETCH Markers $4.95

All Single Colors Available on-line at www.bluelinepro.com or call 859-282-0096

AR-COP450 Colorless Blender	$4.20
AR-COP45100 Black	$4.20
AR-COP45110 Special Black	$4.20
AR-COP452 Sketch 12 Basic Set	$59.40
AR-COP454 Sketch 36 Basic Set	$178.20
AR-COP456 Sketch 72 set A	$356.40
AR-COP458 Sketch 72 Set B	$356.40
AR-COP460 Sketch 72 Set C	$356.40
AR-COP462 Sketch 72 Set D	$356.40
AR-COP95 Empty sketch marker	$3.60

• 500 Copic Opaque White $9.75
COPIC Opaque White is a water based white pigment used for highlight effects. It won't bleed into the base color so it gives sharp line definition and can be used on watercolor as well as other permanent ink surfaces.
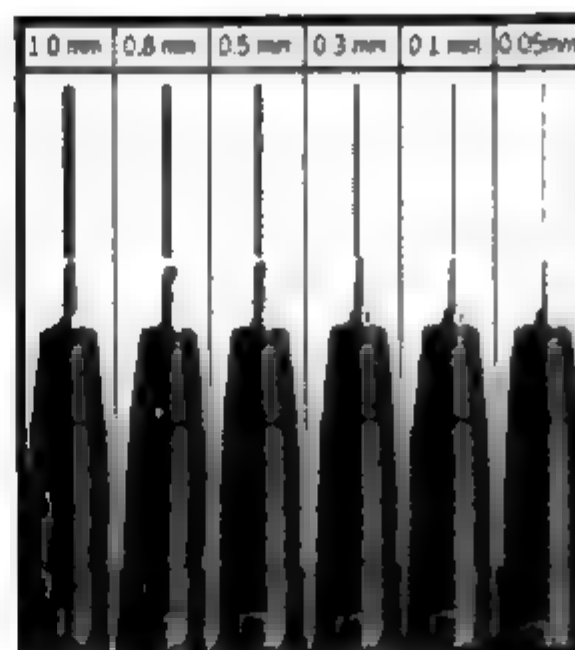AR-COP500 Opaque White $9.75

• COPIC PAPERS
AR-COP510 Copic Alcohol Marker Pad A4 $9.95
AR-COP520 Copic Alcohol Marker Pad B4 $19.95
AR-COP530 Manga Manuscript Paper A4 $6.95
AR-COP540 Manga Manuscript Paper B4 $9.95

• MARKER STORAGE
AR-COP55072 pc Wire Stand $59.95
AR-COP56036 pc Block Stand $29.95

• COPIC's MULTI LINERS drawing pens
allow drawing without annoying running ink. They are available in pens and brush. The pens come in a wide range of line widths

(from .05 to 1.0 mm) while the brushes come in three different sizes: small, medium and large.

• MULTILINERS SINGLES

AR-COP600 Multiliner .05	$2.50
AR-COP610 Multiliner 0.1	$2.50
AR-COP620 Multiliner 0.3	$2.50
AR-COP630 Multiliner 0.5	$2.50
AR-COP640 Multiliner 0.8	$2.50
AR-COP650 Multiliner 1.0	$2.50
AR-COP660 Multiliner Brush M	$2.95
AR-COP670 Multiliner Brush S	$2.95
AR-COP671 Sepia ML .05	$2.50
AR-COP672 Sepia ML 1	$2.50
AR-COP673 Sepia ML 3	$2.50
AR-COP674 Grey ML 05	$2.50
AR-COP675 Grey ML 1	$2.50
AR-COP676 Grey ML 3	$2.50

• SETS
AR-COP680 Multiliner Set A	$15.00
AR-COP690 Multiliner Set B	$20.00

COPIC Air Marker

AIR MARKERS
• 705 ABS-1 Kit
ABS-1 Kit. COPIC Markers can be used as an airbrush by inserting the broad top end of the pen into our uniquely designed adapter. The Airbrush feature is wonderful for creating backgrounds and filling in larger areas of space. The Airbrush tool creates little or no mess and allows for nearly instant change in color. It's simple to use - just attach one end of the COPIC Airbrush hose to a standard airbrush compressor and the other to the COPIC Airbrush adapter and you're ready to go. A compressed air can that attaches directly to the COPIC Airbrush adapter is available for portability. This is the airbrush ABS-1 Kit. It comes with 1. Air Grip (where the pen goes in) 2. The air adapter (where the empty canister that the air grip screws on to. This canister is just a reservoir, it does not contain air.) 3. The airhose (this connects from the bottom of the air adapter to the top of the aircan.) 4. The aircan 80 5. The air can holder (a foam square with 3 holes in it so that you can stand the different sizes of aircans.) This kit has all of the components in it for someone who would like to have portability but have the option to connect it to a compressor.

AR-COP705 ABS-1 Kit $60.95

• 710 Starting Set ABS-2
Set ABS-2. COPIC Markers can be used as an airbrush by inserting the broad top end of the pen into our uniquely designed adapter. The Airbrush feature is wonderful for creating backgrounds and filling in larger areas of space. The Airbrush tool creates little or no mess and allows for nearly instant change in color. It's simple to use - just attach one end of the COPIC Airbrush hose to a standard airbrush compressor and the other to the COPIC Airbrush adapter and you're ready to go. A compressed air can that attaches directly to the COPIC Airbrush adapter is available for portability. This is the portable version of our airbrush system. The ABS-2 Kit comes with a D-60 can of compressed air and the Airgrip. This item is great for the artist on the move. ONLY the D-60 aircan can be attached directly to the air grip because of some special tubing inside the can. The other sizes of aircans 80 and 180 have to be attached to the hose and then to the air adapter. They hold more air but are not so portable.

AR-COP710 Starting Set ABS-2	$28.50
AR-COP720 Starting Set ABS-3	$28.50
AR-COP730 Airgrip	$17.10
AR-COP740 Air Adapter	$11.40
AR-COP750 Airhose 1/4 to 1/8	$21.50
AR-COP755 Airhose 1/8 to 1/8	$21.50
AR-COP760 Air Can D-60	$8.95
AR-COP763 Air Can 80	$10.95
AR-COP765 Air Can 180	$12.95
AR-COP770 Air Compressor	$186.50

NX Kits
AR-COP910 NX Kit 3	$20.00

Starter kit to learn how to use color effects and techniques. Practice Sheets and a Color Guide are included

ZIP-TONES
.Too Professional Tone $5.00 per sht.
(See the website for over 20 different types and styles of tones.)
Copics very own cut and stick Zip-Tone

Go to
www.bluelinepro.com
to see additional
Copic Art Supplies!

DELETER   Manga Kits - Markers - Papers - Inks - Whiteout - Art Tools

For the serious How To Draw fan, the Deleter line of products is here for you. The Deleter line includes color overlays, screens, jr screens, gradations, inking accessories, and the highly prized Neopiko line of alcohol based, double tipped markers. Give them a try today!

Deleter Inking Accessories
• Pen (Nib) Holder
You can use this for all Maru-pens, G-pens, Saji-pens (Tama-pen)
AR-DEL3411003 $3.95

• G-Pen Inking Nib (3pcs)
G-pen is very elastic and drawing main lines or flash line
AR-DEL3411004
$2.95

• Maru-Pen Inking Nib (2pcs)
Maru-pen is good for drawing details
AR-DEL-3411002 $2.50
• Saji-Pen Inking Nib (10pcs)
Saji-pen is smooth and easy to draw all kinds of lines
AR-DEL3411007 $6.95

• Saji-Pen Inking Nib (3pcs)
Saji-pen is smooth and easy to draw all kinds of lines.
AR-DEL3411006
$3.95

DELETER INKS
• Deleter Black 1
Works well drawing lines and painting
AR-DEL3410001 $4.95
• Deleter Black 2
Permanent Ink, can not be removed with an eraser
AR-DEL3410003 $4.95
• Deleter Black 3
Completely waterproof with mat finish.
AR-DEL 3410004 $4.95

• Deleter White 1
Great for touch ups and white details
AR-DEL 3410002 $4.95
• Deleter White 2
Great for touch ups and white details. Waterproof
AR-DEL 3410006 $4.95

Deleter Neopiko Line Pen
A super dark alcohol marker-type line drawing pen.
• AR-DEL3115005 Neopiko Line .05
• AR-DEL3115010 Neopiko Line 1
• AR-DEL3115020 Neopiko Line 2
• AR-DEL3115030 Neopiko Line 3
• AR-DEL3115050 Neopiko Line 5
• AR-DEL3115080 Neopiko Line 8
• AR-DEL3115100 Neopiko Line 1 0
Neopiko Line Pen each   **$2.50**

NEOPIKO MARKERS
Neopiko markers are alcohol-based markers that are great for diffusion effects. Their dark colors contrast sharply with the whiteness of paper, making beautiful lines and clear vibrant colors. Great for coloring illustrations and comics. These 144 different colored markers are available in sets. (Note: Color Codes identifies the colors in that set. Consult the Color Key.)

• Neopiko Marker S1 Set Starter Set
36 markers, 35 colors
-AR-DEL311-0201 $84.95
• Neopiko Marker 36A Set
36 - colors Coffee, Ivory, Blush Pink, Powder Pink, Light Brown, Ocher Beige, Naples Yellow, Light Orange, Pink Beige, Apricot, Beige, Sun Tan, Anise, Sweet Pink, Orchid, Pastel Blue, Celadon, Celery White lily, Opal Green, Pale Violet, Mauvette, Saxe Blue, Pale Sky Sepia, Garnet, Old Rose, Cobalt Blue, Perwinkle, Ever Green, Elm Green, Holly Green, Eggplant, Violet, Pumpkin, Cocca Brown
-AR-DEL-311-0203 $84.95
• Neopiko Marker 36B Set
36 - colors Primrose Yellow Marigold, Ice Blue, Light Aqua, Carmine, Raspberry, Lettuce Green, Peony Light Purple, Ice Green, Mint Green Lemon Yellow, Brilliant Yellow, Cerulean Blue, Strawberry Signal Red, Antique Blue, Grass Green, Bellflower, Scarlet, Magenta, Vivid Pink, Apple Green, Cool Grey 1, Cool Grey 2, Cool Grey 3, Cool Grey 4, Cool Grey 5, Cool Grey 6, Cool Grey 7 Coo Grey 8 Warm Grey 1, Warm Grey 3 Warm Grey 5 Warm Grey 7.
-AR-DEL311-0204 $84.95
• Neopiko Marker 72A Set
72 colors - Pale Pink. Shell Pink, Peach, Coral Pink, Sand, Pastel Peach, Flesh, Salmon Pink, Maize, Sunlight Yellow, Cream, Brown Gold, Terra-cotta, Autumn Leaf, Maroon. Black, Yellow Ochre Dark Brown, Neutral 1, Neutral 3, Neutral 5 Neutral 7, Neutral 9, Pale Yellow, Pale Lemon Aqua Green, Baby Blue, Pale Green. Mist Green Pale mauve Pale Lilac, Pale Blue, Solvent, Baby Pink, Baby Green, Aqua, Med Blue, Turquoise, Rose Pink, Salvia Blue, Steel Blue, Spring Green Vivid Yellow, Moss Green, Lavender, Tropica, Dull Pink, Dandelion, Sky Blue, Pink, Tabacco Brown, Vivid Red, Ultramarine, Vivid Green O ve Green, Iris Orange, Cherry Pink, Emerald, Peacock Green Cherry Red, Mustard Burnt Umber, Crimson, Poppy Red Oriental Blue, Jungle Green, French Blue, Vermiion, Royal Purple, Viridian.
AR-DEL311-0202 $160.00
• Neopiko Marker 72B Set
72 colors - Coffee, Ivory, Blush Pink, Powder Pink, Light Brown, Ocher Beige Naples Yellow, Light Orange, Pink Beige, Apricot, Beige, Sun Tan. Anise, Sweet Pink, Orchid, Pastel Blue, Celadon, Celery. White lily, Opal Green, Pale Violet, Mauvette, Saxe Blue, Pale Sky Sepia, Garnet Old Rose, Cobalt Blue, Periwinkle, Ever Green Elm Green, Holly Green, Eggplant Violet, Pumpkin Cocca Brown, Primrose, Yellow Marigold, Ice Blue, Light Aqua, Carmine, Raspberry, Lettuce Green, Peony, Light Purple, Ice Green, Mint Green, Lemon Yellow, Brilliant Yellow, Cerulean Blue, Strawberry, Signal Red, Antique Blue, Grass Green, Bellflower, Scarlet, Magenta, Vivid Pink, Apple Green, Cool Grey 1, Cool Grey 2, Cool Grey 3, Cool Grey 4, Cool Grey 5 Cool Grey 6, Coo Grey 7, Cool Grey 8, Warm Grey 1, Warm Grey 3, Warm Grey 5, Warm Grey 7.
-AR-DEL311-0205 $160.00

• Neopiko Marker (Skin Set)
Color Code: T1
12 colors - 12 Color - Pale Pink, Shell Pink, Peach, Coral Pink, Sand, Pastel Peach. Flesh, Salmon Pink, Maize, Sunlight Yellow, Cream.
AR-DEL311-0101 $28.95
• Neopiko Marker (Brown & Gray Set)
Color Code T2
12 colors - Brown Gold, Terra-cotta, Autumn Leaf, Maroon, Black, Yellow Ochre, Dark Brown, Neutral 1, Neutral 3, Neutral 5, Neutral 7, Neutral 9
-AR-DEL311-0102 $28.95
• Neopiko Marker (Pale Color Set)
Color Code: T3
12 colors Colors - Pale Yellow, Pale Lemon, Aqua Green, Baby Blue, Pale Green Mist Green, Pale mauve, Pale Lilac, Pale Blue, Solvent, Baby Pink, Baby Green
-AR-DEL311-0103 $28.95
• Neopiko Marker (Light Color Set)
Color Code T4
12 colors Colors - Aqua Med Blue, Turquoise Rose Pink Salvia Blue, Steel Blue. Spring Green, Vivid Yellow Moss Green Lavender, Tropica Dull Pink
-AR-DEL311-0104 $28.95
• Neopiko Marker (Middle Color Set)
Color Code. T5
12 colors - Dandelion, Sky Blue, Pink Tabacco Brown, Vivid Red, Ultramarine Vivid Green, Olive Green, Iris Orange Cherry Pink, Emerald.
-AR-DEL311-0105 $28.95
• Neopiko Marker (Dark Color Set)
Color Code. T6
12 colors - Peacock Green, Cherry Red, Mustard Burnt Umber, Crimson Poppy Red, Oriental Blue, Jungle Green French Blue, Vermilion, Royal Purple Vindian.
-AR-DEL311-0106 $28.95
• Neopiko Marker (Skin Variation Set)
Color Code. T7
12 colors- Coffee, Ivory Blush Pink, Powder Pink, Light Brown, Ocher Beige Naples Yellow, Light Orange, Pink Beige Apricot, Beige, Sun Tan
-AR-DEL311-0107 $28.95
• Neopiko Marker (Super Pale Set)
Color Code. T8
12 colors - Anise Sweet Pink, Orchid, Pastel Blue, Celadon, Celery, White lily Opal Green Pale Violet Mauvette, Saxe Blue, Pale Sky.
-AR-DEL311-0108 $28.00
• Neopiko Marker (Smokey Color Set)
Color Code T9
12 colors - Sepia, Garnet, Old Rose. Cobalt Blue, Perwinkle Ever Green, Elm Green, Holly Green, Eggplant, Violet, Pumpkin, Cocca Brown.
-AR-DEL311-0109 $28.95
• Neopiko Marker (Light Variation Set)
Color Code: T10
12 colors - Primrose, Yellow Mango d, Ice Blue, Light Aqua, Carmine, Raspberry, Lettuce Green, Peony Light Purple Ice Green, Mint Green
-AR-DEL311-0110 $28.95
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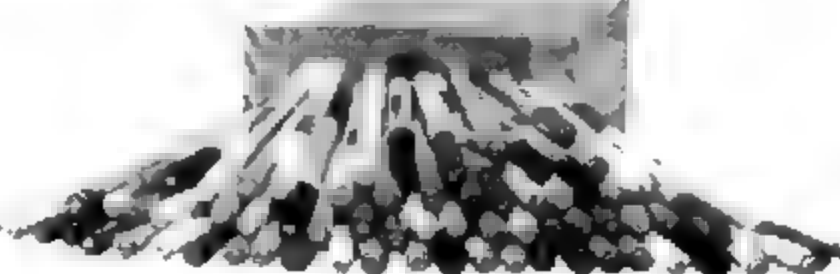-AR-DEL311-0111 $28.95
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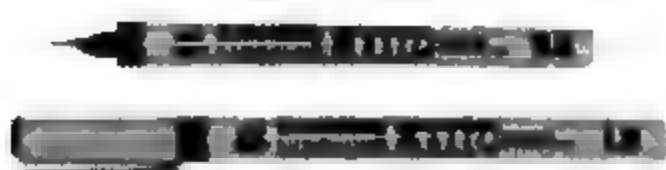*-AR-DEL201 1005 $7.95*
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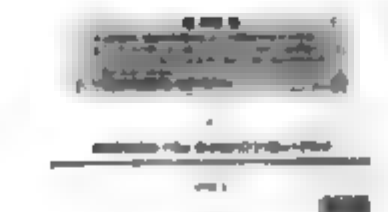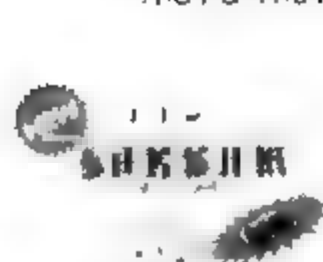*-AR-DEL201-1009 $4.95*

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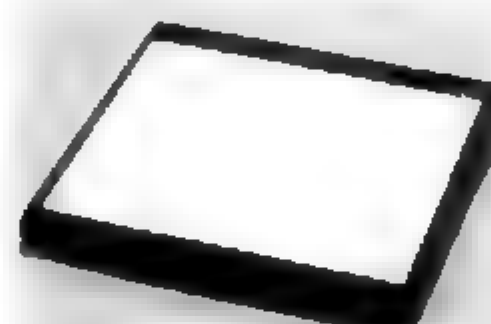*-ARIC-160067*　　$9.95

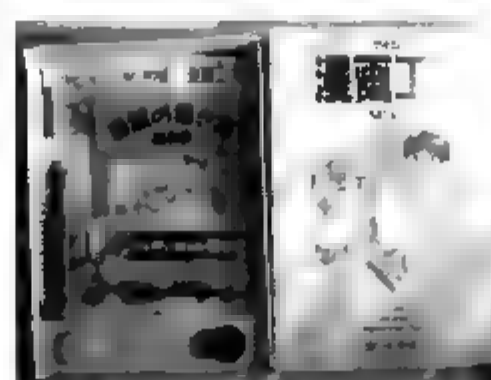**IC COMIC SUPER BLACK (INK)**
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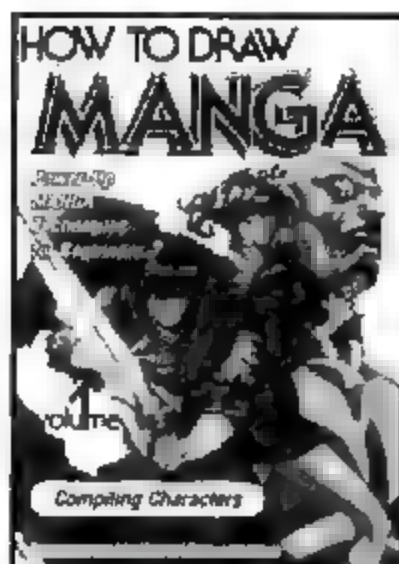*-ARIC-302032 SRP*　　$4.30

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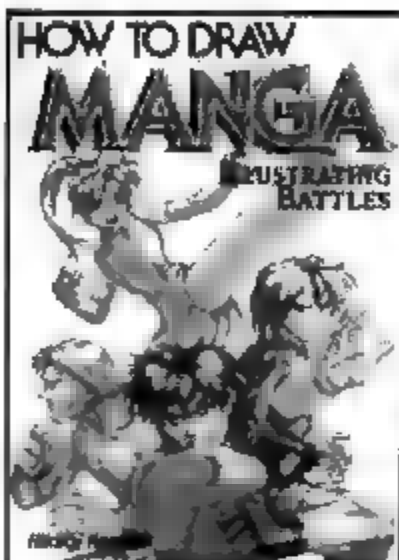Characters in Casual Wear
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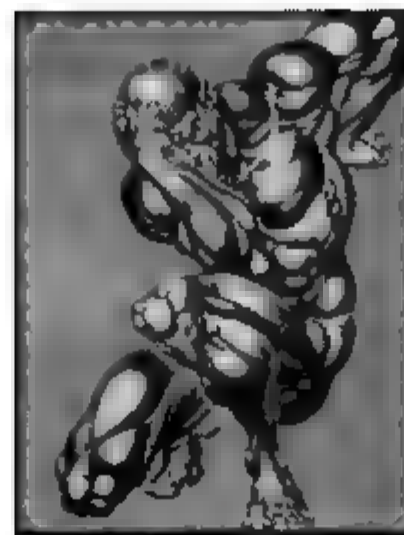ITEM# AB1027 SRP $32.95
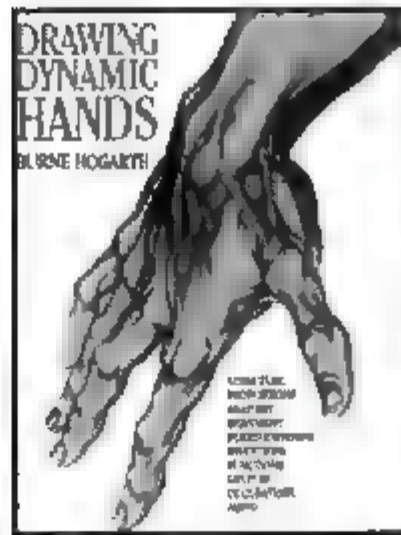
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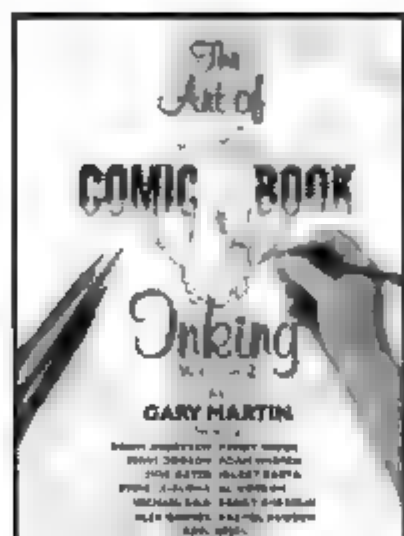ITEM# AB1002 $25.25

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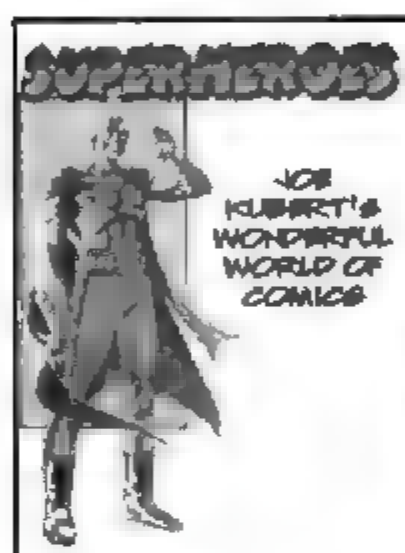
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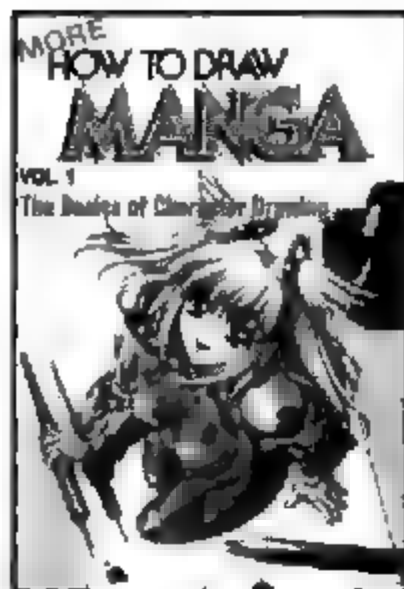ITEM# AB1015m26 $21.95

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Pencil drawing from TRANSFORMERS

get. And you have to cut the stuff yourself. [General laughter.] But I love the paper that we're working on right now, and everybody seems to just really be enjoying it. Also, seeing our logo on the board as well, it's just like, "Cool!" [Blue Line Pro customizes all its board for each individual company.]

Sketch: *Do you have any preferences when it comes to a tooth on the paper?*
Pat: Not really. The stuff that we're using right now is pretty awesome, because you can use it for penciling and use it for inking. It works for the combination of both. But I don't have a preference, really. I'll pretty much draw on everything and anything. [General laughter.]

I actually like to draw on walls. Every time I go to a comic book shop I ask, "Can I draw on your wall?" Actually, there's a comic book shop in Toronto called Heroes World, and they let me draw on their wall one time. And then when I came back the following week they had put a [clear] plastic sheet over it, and they nailed it onto the wall! [General laughter] I just thought that was pretty cool, how they framed it up, you know?

But I love to draw on the wall. When I was a kid, I used to crayon all the walls and stuff like that. My parents would have to constantly redo the walls. I used to draw on the floor, on the cement floor in my parents' store ...I used to get in trouble for that. And spray paint lockers, and stuff. I don't know. I was just a big brat. [General laughter.]

I paint, too. I use acrylics, and I love canvas painting. When I do my own paintings, what I like to do is I like to mold on top of the canvass board with some kind of material, or use any kind of material and glue it to the actual canvass before I start going in

there with the acrylic paint. I find that really unique.

I like painting on different surfaces, because I like model kits. I like Japanese resin model kits, and I'm really into military vehicles and stuff like that. I'm into all kinds of models. As a model kit builder ever since I was really, really young, I've always been into painting on objects. That's why I like canvas painting, and painting on top of sculpted material on top of canvas. I actually just bought a canvas a couple days ago, and I was all excited. And then, "Pat, look at the deadline! You've got to push out *Transformers* volume two!" I'm like, "But I want to work on my painting!" "No, get back on the drawing board." In my spare time I like to paint. I'm an airbrush fanatic. I just love painting, period. I'll paint on anything.

Sketch: *Is that another outlet for your love of colors?*
Pat: Absolutely. My favorite thing in comic books is coloring. As much as I enjoy penciling, I think coloring I enjoy the most. Just because I like bringing things to life with color. I just enjoy taking a simple object and making it look so complicated with colors, and making it look real. I mean, if someone just drew a circle and asked, "What can you do just with color?" Well, absolutely anything. You can just sculpt objects and make a whole planet, or you can make an entire universe, with just one circle of penciling.

And so, with that concept in mind, you can utilize that with our artwork that we do, like the anime style and some of the other styles that we do; simplifying the line art work just really brings out the page. A lot of artists really tend to work on the original art work to the point where the colors won't even do anything to it because it's just so complicated with the penciling. For us the originals may not look as good the final product, but what's most important to us is that the published page itself looks the way you perceive it, the way you want it to.

I was talking with some of my guys here about going nuts with one of my pages, like making it really complex, adding a lot of details, and putting in four hundred people on one page. And they're like, "Why?" And I said, "Because it'll look amazing when it's done." And they're like, "Well, you don't really have to, because that'll kind of numb the look." So I was like, "What do you mean?" "Well, you have an anime kind of style, and the simpler you draw, the better it looks as a final product." And what that made me realize was that it's the final product that's the most important, the key element, when you're producing comic books. It's not always just about the line art work. It's not always about the pen-

ciling, or the inking, or just the coloring. It's a collaboration of all these put together and coming up with the final product.

With *Transformers*, sometimes I'll spend twenty minutes on one page, a completed page, and I'll look back and I'll say, "Man, I didn't do anything to this page." But then I'll look at the final product and it's the best page in the entire book. And I might not understand why at the time, but after a while you understand that it's a group effort. That maybe I didn't put a lot of effort into the foregrounds, but it's adding the backgrounds and the coloring, the amalgamation of it all, that made the page look the way it did. That's what made it the best page in the book.

Sketch: *What's an optimal pages-per-day rate for you, as far as producing work that you're really happy with, but still being able to publish the book in a timely manner?*
Pat: I can produce, with decent quality, up to four pages a day. After the fourth page, I'm about to drop dead. I would say what I'm happy with is doing a page a day. If I could do a page a day, which I rarely ever get an opportunity to...It would be awesome to be able to spend the time just working on one page. But I have to do covers, I have to do designs for this company, or do coloring for this person, or what ever. I'm doing so many different things in one day. Like, if we're short of a colorist my brother will come up to me and say, "Hey man, we need a colorist for *Shidima*. Can you help out?" And I'll go, "Okay."

And we work with so many different artists, and still it's like, "What about Shaun? Can Shaun do it?" They're like, "No, he's busy." "Okay, can Mel do it?" "No, he's busy." "Well, what about Lou?" "No, he can't do it." It's like everyone is just busy on their own stuff, and I'm thinking, "We need more artists!" You know what I mean? [General laughter.] It's kind of cool when you think about it, though. It just means our business is expanding. So we're really happy with the direction that the company's heading in.

Sketch: *How do you approach creating a cover or a pin-up?*
Pat: It works the same way as a regular page. But in terms of conceptual ideas, I think that you really have to try and think of what's crucial, and what the audience wants to see. With *Transformers* it was characters. Because there were so many characters that the readers wanted to see we kind of did Decepticons and Autobots covers, and for each issue we put two or three characters on each cover. There's some characters in the actual comic book who are not paid that much attention to, so what we do is put them on the cover so that fans are

happy. To us, it really depends on number one, what the audience wants to see; number two, what you, personally, would want to see; third, what's the story about, and how to apply that to the cover. So we try to do different things with different covers. I have a friend of mine, his name is Locke, and he mentioned to me a really interesting concept. He said, "Why are people doing all these detailed covers and stuff? I just wish someone could do an orange cover that just says something like, 'Pick me up!' Or something." And I think that's a really interesting concept that no one's ever done before. Because people are so focused on doing the best and coolest and most detailed cover, no one's really thinking of the marketing aspect of it. Like, what about just throwing something that's so unrelated to the interior that it makes people confused? People would pick that up and say, "What's this?" and when they looked at the interior, they may be interested and they'll pick it up. Sometimes you'll whip through things and say, "Oh, I've seen that before. Oh, I've seen that." What about something that is completely unrelated to the interior, or something that will just pop up on the shelf, like a florescent orange cover?

Anyway, sometimes we'll want to take an amalgamation of everything that's on the interior of the book and put it on the cover. Or sometimes we'll be really simplistic and just put a face on the cover. It just depends on what we're trying to pull from the interiors. Then sometimes we don't want the audience to know, from viewing the front cover, of what the interior is like, so we'll do something simplistic on the cover. So it really depends on the situation, and what we want the audience to see.

The covers play such an important role, I'm finding, as an artist, sometimes I won't even want to do the cover. Maybe I'll give it to another artist to do. I think it's interesting, just from an artist's perspective, seeing other artists doing your book's cover. When I was younger, I was like, "Oh, man, I can't wait to do my own cover!" and now it's like, "Man, I can't wait to see someone else do my cover!" [General laughter] It's really interesting to see what other artists would do.

Sketch: Do you tend to ultimately end up just following your instincts as far as what you put on the cover of any particular issue?
Pat: Yeah, I pretty much do. I try to think of something that's cool looking. Colors, again, play such a key element to my covers. Sometimes I'll be really simplistic, and allow a colorist to go in there and do something really interesting. But we often do covers that are somewhat unrelated to the interiors.

We look at it from different perspectives. I try to look at it from the perspective of marketing. I look at it from the perspective of what the reader would be interested in seeing, and trying to make something that's interesting, and cool, and shot from a different perspective. It's really important to look at it from all different angles. You can't just look at it from one perspective. You have to look at a cover from every single angle, or you're only going to attract certain people.

Sketch: Do you have to kind of switch gears mentally when you go from doing sequential work to a cover, or vice versa?
Pat: Kind of. I wouldn't say a lot, but sometimes when you're working on a cover you have to focus more. Because most of the time it's representing all twenty-two pages inside it has definitely got to be a cover you think about, and make sure that what you're doing represents the book as a whole. And so, you do have to think a little differently. But to me, generally, it's similar to working on the interiors. After doing the amount of covers that I've done, after reading the script, you kind of get accustomed to knowing what you choose and pick out of the script to do as the cover. Or maybe you won't even want to do that at all. Maybe you want to do something that's absolutely different. Sometimes covers just pop up in my head and I say, "Oh, that would be cool!" So I'll just do a little layout of it, and if I like it, then I'll often choose that over the other two I laid out the other day.

Usually I do a couple of layouts before I'll actually work on the final cover. And I'll just blow that up, just the same way I told you about earlier. I blow everything up from a small thumbnail. So basically it's the same kind of process.

Sketch: As far as time goes, do you put a little more into creating a cover than you would spend working on a typical interior page?
Pat: Oh, yeah, I definitely put more time into my covers. As much as I can get. I just hate the last minute things, like; "We need a cover tomorrow. We got to get it together for solicitation!" "What?" [General laughter] But when that doesn't happen, yeah, absolutely. I try to put more effort into my covers than I do the interiors. I try to balance it all. I wish that I could spend as much time as I could on the entire book, but if I had a choice I'd prefer to spend more time on the cover, just because it's seen right away. When you're walking down the shelf, what grabs your attention? Well, it's the cover. If the cover doesn't look good, then they won't look at the interior. So I think both are important, but I think, yeah, the cover is more important,

just to grab the reader's attention.

Sketch: Do you have to work from model sheets with Transformers, *or are you able to keep a lot of those design specs in your head?*
Pat: Some of it is model sheets, and a lot of it is just in my head. And I'll make up stuff as I go along. Like, if I'm going to do a city, I'll just make it up. I'll have the general concept in my head, and I'll just apply that on paper. If it's a character, then I'll actually do the side, front, back, the action shot, spec sheet. And that's for the main characters. There's some characters where, "Eh, I'll just wing it."

In terms of the *Transformers*, I've memorized so many characters. I think it's just from drawing them over and over again. I could draw Optimus Prime blindfolded. And Megatron. To me they're so easy to draw, just because I've drawn them so many times. Some characters I've memorized, some characters I have a very difficult time drawing, just because I'm like, "Oh, I remember that toy. That toy broke on me! I don't feel like drawing him today." [General laughter]

But, seriously, some characters I just don't have as much urge to draw as others, so I won't remember exactly how they look. Characters like Transformers, there are certain things about each character that need to be precise, or certain fans won't be happy. So I have to make sure I catch as much detail as I can about the characters.

Sketch: Were the character sheets you're using provided to you, or did you create your own? And, if the latter, how did you decide which specific version of the character to use?
Pat: Well, if you look at Optimus Prime, you'll notice that he's been drawn in so many ways. What I did was, I took what was the best out of all of those areas, from the cartoons to the toys, the animation cells to the image shots of the cars, and combined them all together. So I took the best elements of what I felt were the best designs and put them all together to make my own Optimus Prime. There's no real, one design of Optimus Prime, you know? If

Pencil drawing from TRANSFORMERS

Pencil drawing from TRANSFORMERS

you look at the toy designs of Optimus Prime, well, those are extremely detailed, like the car. But if you look at the cartoon, it's simplified. So which way do you go? I just said to myself, "You know what? I'm just going to take what I think looks like Optimus Prime, and build upon that."

And so I did that with each individual character. There are certain characters, like Ironhide, where I felt the toy didn't do justice to the comic book, so I took the one from the cartoon and I added more detail. And I guess there's certain characters, like Bumblebee, who was a perfectly good toy, but looked a lot better in the cartoon. So I took my cue from the cartoon one, instead, because that's how people remember Bumblebee.

Sketch: Do you ever work from the toys? I'd imagine that you have a few laying about the offices.
Pat: Absolutely. I'm staring right now at about two hundred Transformer toys that I use as reference in a box.

Sketch: I bet that also helps when you're looking for new angles and such, too.
Pat: Definitely. It was awesome going to Botcon [the annual, official, and incredible convention for and of all things Transformer], because there's just so many Transformers. And it was like, "Wait, I get to collect the tapes again!" I have all the tapes now.

But it's definitely useful, especially the weaponry. Because sometimes you'll ask things like, "This guy's supposed to have this cannon. What's it look like?" And pictures just don't do it justice, so it's always good to have the original toy at hand so no one can say, "That's not what it looks like!"

"Well, I got it from the toy." [General laughter] So it definitely helps to have the original toys as reference.

Sketch: Plus, it gives you something to play with. Strictly for inspiration, of course. [General laughter.]
Pat: Exactly. While I'm trying to figure out the shot that I want, I'll just whip out my Sideswipe and start playing with it. It's funny, because I never get bored with them. I still play with them. They're all over my office. Sometimes I carry them in my pocket while I'm walking around the office, then I'll go to like a dinner meeting, and I pull it out of my pocket. "What a minute, what's this Transformer doing in my pocket?" [More laughter] Sometimes I'll have Soundwave clipped onto my belt just as I walk around and I'm trying to figure out what book has to ship in what time frame, or trying to help out colorists. And later I'll be at a friend's and they'll go, "Why do you have Soundwave clipped to your belt?" I check and I'm like, "Wait a second, I do. What the hell's that doing there?" [Laughter] I don't know, sometimes I'll have toys all over the place. I'll have them in my jacket, I'll have them in my pencil case. I have some Headmasters in my pencil case. And for what? [Laughter] I just like carrying them around. I'm a very gadget-oriented person. That's why I love *Transformers.*

Sketch: Do you have to use a lot of straight edges working on these characters, or is that akin to the idea behind drawing buildings from earlier, where you do it freehand because it looks better?
Pat: Definitely on the backgrounds, we use a lot of rulers. But, in terms of the actual *Transformer* characters, I think I've used a ruler maybe two times in the whole series. I mostly just wing it by hand. I don't like to use rulers. And that's why I like the look of the battered up Transformers. If they look battered up and stuff, what's the point of using a ruler? I don't believe that Transformers, if they were to exist, would clean themselves and bathe themselves. So the way that I draw them, they're like really rusty, and they're not always in mint condition. They're battling Decepticons all the time, you know? They don't always have time to go back to the shop and replace a panel, so I figured the best way to do them would be to rust them up a bit, here and there, and not always make the edges perfectly straight. I'm not into the ruler. I don't like to use a ruler.

Sketch: Does that also include when you ink, and for your inkers, generally?
Pat: Inking is a totally different scenario. Some of the inkers definitely use a ruler,

but then they'll go on top of the line they inked and they'll kind of flare it out a bit, or give a little bit of an indentation to the line, so it doesn't look too perfect. With the backgrounds, we don't ink at all. The background artists definitely use rulers for different areas. Again, it really depends on how decrepit the metal is, how new it is, the type of material it is. But we only use rulers for backgrounds, for perspective shots. If we want to do a city from a bird's eye view, then we'd definitely use a ruler to guide us.

Sketch: Do you have much use for other guides, like French or flexi-curves?
Pat: Yes, absolutely. All the artists have French curves, and that's the one they typically use. But I don't really touch my French curve. I think the last time I used my French curve was a couple weeks ago, or a month ago. I usually freehand everything.

Sketch: Practice makes perfect, or perfect enough, right?
Pat: Absolutely. [General laughter.]

Sketch: So you don't ink backgrounds?
Pat: Not any more. We used to, but we don't anymore.

Sketch: So you take care of all that on computer?
Pat: We color them on computer, but we pencil them in, and we brush them using Photoshop. So we don't ink the backgrounds anymore, we just scan them at gray scale.

Sketch: Is that for speed, effect, or both?
Pat: We want the backgrounds to look more like a painting, so we won't bold the backgrounds with inks. I don't think it's a necessity, either. Your main focus should be on your characters, and usually the main focus is the characters, unless it's a background shot. But even if it's completely a background shot you're not focusing on any characters, so the main focus will be the backgrounds.

Sketch: Does that also help with getting the foreground to pop?
Pat: Oh, absolutely. Because the inks are so bold, and the backgrounds are more brushed - and very obscurely there - it definitely pops the foreground. Especially adding like, an animation cell color to the foreground, it really pulls the characters away from the backgrounds.

Sketch: You've got some pretty crazy hours, don't you?
Pat: Yeah, pretty crazy. Today I woke up at around three o'clock in the afternoon, and I'll be here until seven-thirty in the morning. Most of the time I'll go home at around

six o'clock, and then I get up at around one o'clock, or two o'clock in the afternoon. [Laughter] Usually by the time I get to the studio, not a lot of people are here. And that's just because I prefer to work at nighttime because it's quiet, and I can work better. I try to come in as early as possible, but I can't work during the day. Usually my brother's here, handling the project management side, overseeing things. Still, I try to be here as much as I can during the day, but I know that I won't get that much done. I'm a vampire. I see the sun once in a while when it's barely up there.

Sketch: *Right, usually when you're stumbling to and from a con, right?*
Pat: Yep. Exactly. My sun is the Dreamwave booth. [General laughter.]

Sketch: *What kind of lessons have you learned about dealing with licensers that you can share with us? Do you have any general rules of thumb that might ease the way for others?*
Pat: That's really hard to answer, because that's not really my profession. It's more Adam Fortier's [Dreamwave's New Business Developer] area. I do attend the majority of meetings with Adam, but that's definitely a question for Adam.
But I'd probably say that you just have to understand what a licenser wants, from every single area. Definitely, quality is a big part. I know that, dealing with different licensers, they want to make sure that you're a company that will fight for their property, and that will do justice to their property, which is absolutely understandable. There's a lot of maintenance, and making the artwork look the way they want it to look, and it's absolutely understandable. It's their property, and if they want it to look a certain way then it's got to look a certain way. Looking at it as someone who owns a property, like myself - I own certain properties, and if I was to license any of those properties out, I would want to make sure that I would be somewhat involved in it, and make sure that it has a certain look to it. And definitely I've found with the different entities that we've chosen to produce as comic books, we've had a lot of leniency with our titles, and future titles, and we've been able to build great relationships with the different companies that we've worked with. With that, we've built other projects together. And, with the great relationships that we do have with these licensers, we've been able to not just work on *Transformers*, but also to work on other things that are unrelated to comic books, which is great With *Transformers* alone, yes, definitely we have the *Transformers* license, and that was the primary thing that we focused on. But

now we're able to do different things with Hasbro, as well. We've done some of the box art, or we'll help out with mini comic books, and there are a lot of other things we plan on doing in the future with Hasbro, as well.
If anyone plans to get any licensed title, what they would really need to understand is that they have to have a lot of respect for the property, and they have to really believe in it, that you will be successful with it. And, sometimes, the properties aren't all that cheap! [General laughter] So you have to make sure that you do justice to the property, that you believe in it.

Sketch: *It's got to be really interesting doing box art for a toy line you bought as a kid.*
Pat: Oh, definitely. I kind of freaked out when I saw Takara's Japanese version of Prowl and Jazz. Because I didn't expect it. I kind of thought, "Whoa. That's cool, they used our art!" It was fascinating to see it finally produced. I mean, I knew it was going to be, but to actually see it, it's like, "Whoa, that's weird." Because it's not only *Armada*. *Armada* was cool on its own, but to see like a *Generation 1* box art with your art work on it was just like, "Hey, that's cool!"
And to see the final product! I mean, I have like twenty of them. And it's not twenty that I got from Hasbro; I went out and I bought 20. [General laughter] Just because, "That's so cool, I have to buy it." "But you have one already, Pat!" "Who cares? Let's buy it again!" So it's still very new to me. I haven't kind of woken up from that yet. But it was definitely cool to see my artwork on the box.

Sketch: *What kind of special challenges did that job pose?*
Pat: Originally when I did the artwork, it wasn't meant for the boxes. But they pulled images from the comic covers, and they threw them on the box. At least for the *Generation 1* toys. With *Armada*, it was kind of a shock. I wasn't ready for it in a way because, "This is going to be box art?" You know what I mean? [Laughter] I was just so fascinated by the fact that it was going to show up on a toy.
So we just did the best that we could, trying to make it as precise as we could to the toy, and giving it a dynamic pose. And being involved with the mini comic book for *Transformers* is very interesting as well. If you look at the toy itself, we have our art on the box, we have our art on the sticker, and we have our art in the actual mini comic book which also points people to our website So it was a great marketing schematic. It was pretty cool what we pulled off.

Sketch: *I can imagine that the mini comic must have presented some interesting challenges, too. I mean, you've already stripped your art of a lot of details already, and now you've got to simplify it and shrink it?*
Pat: We actually simplified the script as well. I remember that we were told that it was going to be multiple languages on one page. But the original script was much more complex, so Chris Saracini had to really break it down into very simple terms because it was more for children than adults. So there were a lot of challenges to it, because we weren't used to doing such a small book. But it was a lot more relaxing than doing a full fledged comic book, just because there's less detail involved.

Sketch: *How much does the intended audience of a title weigh in with your approach to it? What I'm getting at is that between, let's say* Darkminds, Warlands, *and* Transformers, *there's quite a bit of territory being covered there.*
Pat: Absolutely. *Transformers* has over twenty years of fan base growth to it. It got great exposure on TV, and in toys and other merchandise. So it definitely has a huge following to it, which is one of the reasons why it is so successful. But it does take the right team to work on a licensed property. As big as *Transformers* is, it really needs to be pampered, too, from an artistic standpoint. If you didn't have the right people to work on it, and to also guide it, it may not have worked out. Our color schematics, and the team that we put together, stabilized our fan base, and it really brought attention to our company, and it really nurtured the comic book title.
Transformers is very successful, as toys. But in terms of the comic book, definitely if it wasn't a great team, if everything sucked, who knows what the orders would be like? But we put so much effort into the final

Pencil drawing from DARKMINDS

Artwork from Dreamwave's DARKMINDS

quality of the scripting and everything, and it's paid off. We've been able to keep our readership, which is so important to us. We hope we have the same popularity with *Transformers* with the next series. We hope to continue that tradition. But if we don't maintain it, if we don't structure it properly, if we choose individual artists or writers that fans feel aren't capable of writing or drawing *Transformers*, then it'll probably all go sour.

That's why we put Simon Furman on a book. Simon Furman is a great writer. He understands *Transformers*, and the fans welcome h.m. It's great to have Simon Furman on board, since he has so much knowledge of *Transformers*, and it definitely lends his reputation to the comic book itself. It's definitely teamwork. It is a popular property, but I strongly believe that you need to maintain it. You've got to have the right team on it, or it may eventually, in the long run, just fall apart, even though the property is incredible

Sketch: *Do you think that most of your audience is more of an adult audience, or are you pulling readers from other sectors?*
Pat: A big portion of our collectors range in age from fourteen and up, to like thirty. Maybe fourteen to twenty-five year-olds, that's our general readership. We are producing projects right now, as I speak, more simplified titles. More educational books. High concept ideas that will be geared more towards children's books. but will also be turned out as comic books as well. So we definitely will have a mixed bag of age groups for our different titles. We don't want to just attract the older crowd. We defi-

nitely do want to attract children, as well. So I created three new entities which we will be publishing next year. And they're more for children. They're concepts that are more for children. I mean, there is a complexity to it, but there's no murder involved, and ... [Laughter] *Darkminds* is a very dark book. But this has more of a children's book flavor to it.

Sketch: *Right. It doesn't mean that you can't touch on or deal with issues, it's just done in a different manner than more mature minded comics would handle it.*
Pat: Right. Exactly.

Sketch: *One thing that seems to be a central theme for you is that you really do believe in extending that hand to new people, and offering them a seat at the big table, so to speak, just like Dan Fraga did for you all those years ago.*
Pat: Well, definitely, Dan and I have talked a lot about new talent, and what it takes to bring these guys into the industry. I've kind of fallen into following his footsteps in the sense that he was trying to help someone out, and that's basically what it was about. It wasn't about money. It wasn't about popularity. It was more based on a simple decision: this guy needs help, and he's good at what he does. Let's get him in the industry. And I look at that and I say, "You know what? That's why he's a good friend of mine." He does the good, simple things, and he doesn't look at all the different angles of it. What Dan wanted to really do was to help someone to break in. It was just because he had a good heart. And in so many ways I just look at that and go, "That's so true."

But in this industry, no one seems to be hiring any new talent. And there's got to be a company out there that's going to hire new talent and bring new guys in. Ninety percent of the people we hire are new talent. A lot of the guys at Udon worked for Dreamwave Productions. A couple guys that work for Marvel come from Dreamwave. And a lot of the guys that work in-house, they're all new. They're all guys that worked for different companies, in different industries, and decided that they wanted to be part of Dreamwave Productions. Maybe they knew nothing about coloring comic books, but knew how to paint. Or they're colorists that have done designs for music videos, or who did animation, that want to help out with coloring at Dreamwave. So it's kind of taking artists from different areas and bringing them into the industry. Sometimes we'll just hire someone who's never touched publicly published stuff before, just because no one will give them any kind of chance, and

they produce quality work. And because they want to do a good job right from the beginning, and they're willing to put together great artwork for the company, it's worthwhile to invest money into them.
And I'm not saying that I wouldn't hire previously established professionals. We do hire a lot of professional artists. But we've had a lot of bad experiences with certain people who are professional, and it's not like that for everyone. That's not what I'm saying. I just think that a lot of new artists need to be given the opportunity and the chance to get a job in comic books.
We get flooded by so many different artists sending us their portfolios. But our company's very picky. If we see something we like, we should be able to notice it within the first five seconds of reviewing their portfolio. If that's not seen, then we probably won't be hiring them. As much as we choose artists that have never done any published work, at the same time we're still very picky

Sketch: *What are some of your suggestions for aspiring artists?*
Pat: We don't even look for any particular specific style. If it grabs our attention, we'll grab them. If there's a certain level of professionalism, then we'll grab them. We definitely look for cleanliness. We definitely look for structure.
From pencilers, we look at their capabilities at being a director, their cleanliness, what kind of lead they use, how fast that they can do a page. What are their capabilities? What are their weaknesses, and what are their strengths? In penciling, we look in all different directions.
The same with inkers. With inkers, it's what kind of ink do they use? How fast can they do a page? Whether it be published work or not, what did they do previously? And cleanliness is definitely a big thing, and understanding line weights for inks.
And for colorists, it's really can you paint? Are you a good painter? As much as you can paint, can you do cel style coloring? And if we pull you off of cel style coloring and ask you to do a different style, do you have the capabilities and the flexibility to do that, too?
So there are different areas that we look at, and it's a tough call sometimes when we hire. Sometimes we'll see a group of artists that are amazing, but we only have the budget to hire certain people, or a certain amount of artists. It also depends on what's open. But generally speaking we are always interested in looking at new talent, and we're always hiring. We're constantly hiring. Right now we need five new colorists and we need two new inkers for new projects that we're putting out in 2003. So

like I said, we've been looking for artists for the past nine months. It's kind of cool that we're a new publishing company, and experiencing all of the things that come with it. And hiring is definitely a big portion of our company. We want to see more guys working under the Dreamwave roof, so we're definitely expanding.

Sketch: What kind of things do you think writers need to be paying attention to these days?

Pat: It really depends upon the medium that they chose to work in. I think writers in general, like pencilers, need to try something different, and to work towards a level that could really touch an individual, and to be able to get a readership to understand that this comic book could relate to them. I find that many of the comic books that do well out there tend to be books that readers can easily relate to themselves. I think that's a very crucial thing. And I know that's very broad, but I think that's one crucial element that readers want to see. And after talking to a lot of people out there in the market, I can say that a lot of comic book collectors say the same thing. I ask, "What interests you?" And they go, "Well, if I can relate to it, that's definitely a bonus, you know?"

That's like when I talk with Chris. I go, "What inspires you? What makes you excited, and what do you see that's different out there?" And every writer has their own flavor of style and perception that's different from another writer. It's things like where they add suspense, or character build-ups.

There are so many different things that we can change in the industry, and different ways of toning stories. But one thing that's definite is that we need to put out a lot more stories that relate not just to the characters in that realm, but also characters that relate to ourselves, and the average person that's out there. Sometimes you don't need spandex clothing to explain a story line.

I think that a lot of people would be really interested in superheroes that just dress normal. That don't have spandex clothing. Like, "What if Todd McFarlane was given super powers tomorrow? What would happen? What would he do?" I don't mean to talk just about Todd McFarlane. It could be you. What if you're given the power to breathe fire? What would you do? So, being able to relate to that, I know that's something that readers want to see more of.

Sketch: What do you want your audience to get from your work?

Pat: Definitely the same sense that they feel when they're watching a movie. That's why in one of my new books, which is a short mini-series, I am doing each panel as a cin-ematic style panel, and every panel will be the same size.

We definitely want our readers to feel that they are in the environment. I think that's a crucial thing, and I think *Darkminds* issue one volume one portrays that. It makes you feel that you are there. Did you notice that all our comics have black borders on them? The reason that we do that is because we feel that white gutters definitely numb the panel. It doesn't allow the readers to become absorbed in it. With black, because it's such a solid, dark color, the borders don't even seem to be there, so the pages flow a lot better. Instead of making the borders all separate, you're making the panels flow as you read down the page.

And definitely we want our readers to get a sense that they could be these characters, that they definitely feel they are part of the story. And that they feel that each issue is a cliffhanger. That they're wondering, "What's going to happen next issue?" And that they can't wait to get to the next issue. But, visually, we definitely want our readers to feel like they're watching movies. And that was the original answer I gave when somebody asked me that same question back four or five years ago. I wasn't even being asked about *Darkminds*, and I said the exact same thing. I wanted people to feel like they were watching a movie, at least for my personal book, and especially for *Transformers* as well.

Sketch: Is that something you'd be interested in, the possibility of doing some film work?

Pat: I plan to produce a fifty-minute short for the Toronto Film Festival in 2004. Actually, we've been talking about it for the last week. It's something just to see your creations coming to life. I know it won't take me away from comic books. I know I will always be pretty much drawing comic books, and be part of the comic book industry. But, once in a while, you like to do something different. That's why it's only a fifty minute short: to try something new, and to see your creations come to life, and those characters that you have in your head come to life. I'm going to be directing the short and be part of the production team. A lot of guys in Dreamwave are going to help on it, and I think it's going to be a lot of fun. It's going to be very interesting to see what we come up with. We all figure that if we can draw comics, we can all definitely direct movies.

Sketch: Do you have any interest in stuff like storyboarding films?

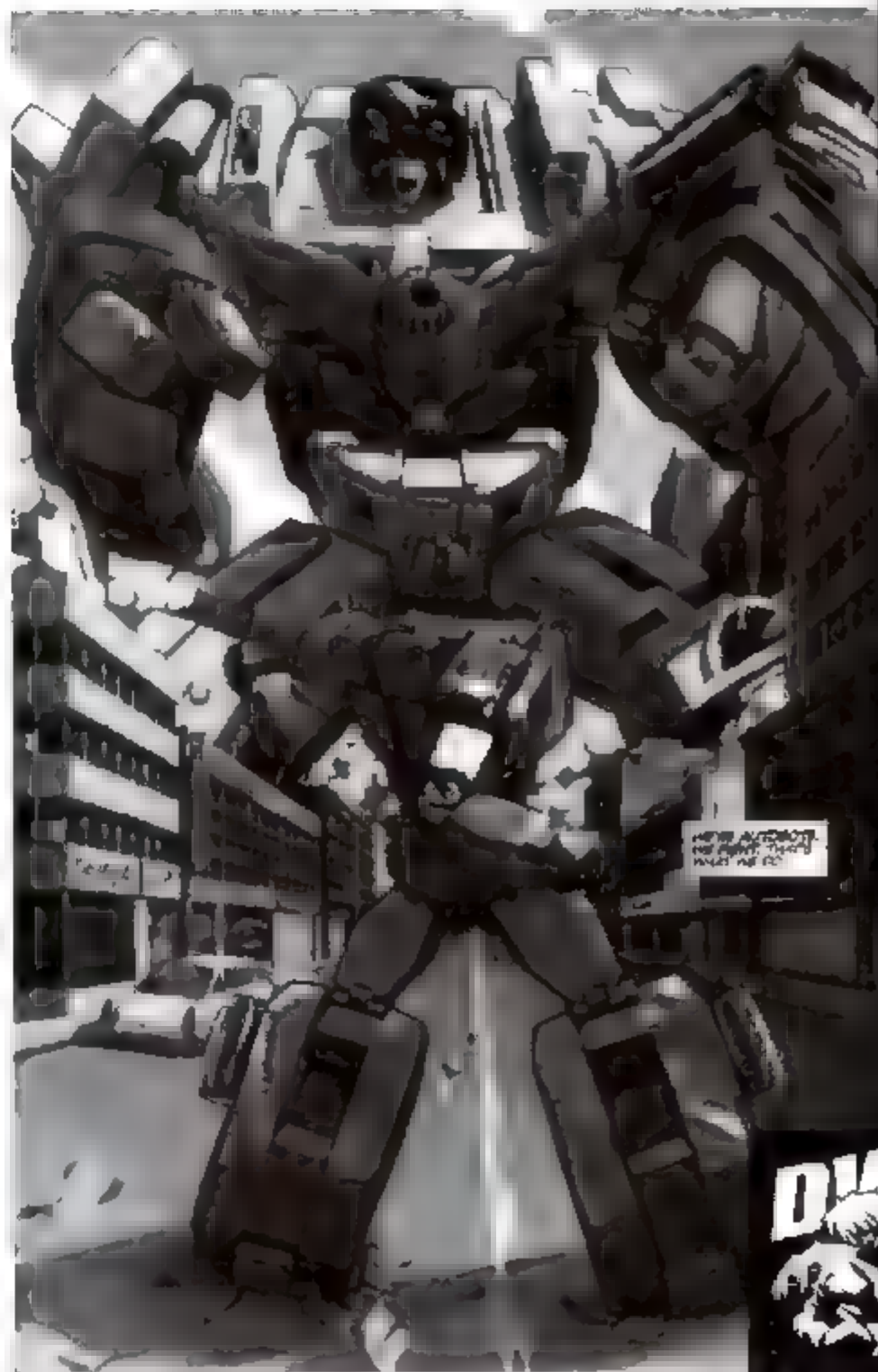**Pat:** Not really. I'm not really a storyboard artist, as much as I enjoy it. I don't see myself doing storyboards for other mov-ies. I'll probably only do storyboards for personal projects, even though I visualize it in my head, for other people so they can see what's in my mind. And that's pretty much it.

Sketch: So what do you get from all this work - aside from the mansion, fancy cars and such, of course? [General laughter.]

Pat: Honestly? One word: freedom. Ever since I was seventeen I was told what to do, and I was really tired of it. I tired of just doing what people asked me to do. I finally have an opportunity to go in the direction I want to take. If I wanted to produce my own three part miniseries of, I don't know, *Little Red Riding Hood* and the *Three Little Pigs*, I could. If I wanted to do the design for a T-shirt, I could. And being able to get this freedom is not an easy thing. We went through a lot of hardship, a lot of sweat and tears and blood, to get to where we are today. It was very difficult, and a lot of times we almost fell apart. It's great to be able to share with the guys who are still here with me, that have been with me for the last four or five years, to be able to share and experience things with them.

But the primary thing is definitely being able to have the freedoms and capabilities as an artist to be an artist, and to create new entities, and to be able to possibly produce them as movies, or video games, or toys, or television series. Whatever the case may be, it's creating. And that's the one thing that I love doing, is having the freedom to create. Dreamwave gives me those opportunities, and I'm allowed to create new entities for different markets.

Artwork from TRANSFORMERS

MIKE DOMINIC
How to Publish a Comic for Next to Nothing

If you've been following comics production at all, you know what an increasingly popular tool the computer is for creators. Comics professionals find they can do more, quicker, while new creators find they can get more professional results using a good computer system. Lettering, coloring, and printing of comic books have benefited greatly from computer developments. While this flexible tool has not completely replaced traditional methods of doing the work, it has opened up new possibilities for young creators to refine, enhance, distribute and promote their work. The end result is that more creators are able to make their work available to more people, allowing the reader to benefit from a greater diversity of comics.

As with any method of production, however, cost is still a big hurdle with the personal computer. Professional quality requires professional tools, and young creators can find themselves stopped cold by the thousands of dollars needed to invest in such high-end tools as Microsoft Office, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, and Quark Xpress. Lettering fonts, how-to literature and software guides can be hard to find, and costly for someone who just wants to experiment. Meanwhile, print and web-hosting solutions can be just as costly and inaccessible for the newbie. If you are just starting to produce comics by computer, or to just looking to experiment with this tool, the total cost can really put you off! The idea of having to shell out that much money without even knowing if the end result will be improved by it can turn you away from the computer, if not away from comics altogether!

Yet hope endures. comics do not need to be expensive to produce, and using some of the tools freely available over the internet, can be done practically for free! Professional quality work can be created using just your own talent, and free software and services accessible to anyone, anywhere. In this article, I will walk you through the process of creating and publishing a page of comic art using only freely available tools and methods. The only thing you will need to create a comic this way is a personal computer and an internet connection...and, of course, a little bit of talent.

For the purposes of this article, I am going to be assuming that you are working on a Windows machine. While I understand that Apple computers are the preferred system for graphics professionals, a Windows PC generally comes much cheaper, and is more commonly found in homes and small businesses. From my experience, a Windows machine can do the job just as well as a Mac, despite what all the Microsoft-bashers might say.
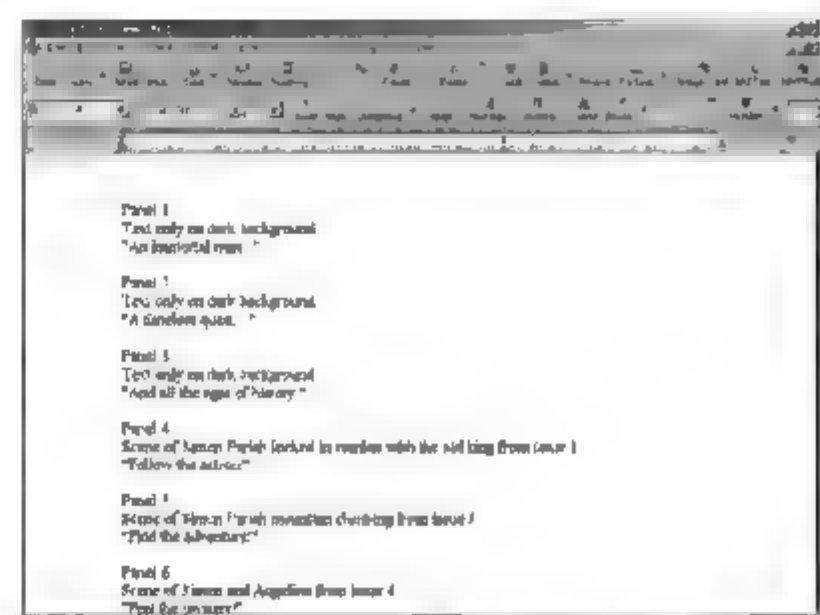
Writing the Comic

Before you get down to drawing the page, you need to know what you're going to put on it, right? So, first you need some place to jot down your ideas, your thought sketches, and your rough drafts before you get the final script in place. In this case, I have drafted the page using a tool called Treepad (http://www.treepad.com). This free writing tool lets you organize your clips of text into categories and sub-categories using a two-paned tree-like browser. This interface allows me to switch quickly between projects, or topics within projects, and edit each easily. There's no fancy formatting here, no crazy fonts or graphics, but it's the ideal solution for organizing those ideas and inspirations that come to you in a flash of brilliance. Even better, the whole program fits on and runs from a single floppy disk, so you can carry your priceless storehouse of ideas around with you wherever you go and run it from practically any computer. I've always heard that an artist should carry a sketchbook wherever he/she goes; consider this a digital writer's sketchbook that can be used from home, the office, or the internet cafe.

Treepad Screenshot

Once the text for the page is settled, then it has to be formatted into a proper script for the artist. That's where a higher power tool is going to be necessary. Now, a commercial office suite is going to set you back a few dollars, but why do that when there are other, equally useful tools available for nothing more than the cost of the time it takes to download them? In this case, I am using a free word processor called 602Text (http://www.software602.com/products/pcs/). While it might not have all the bells and whistles of a Microsoft product, it contains all the basic functions necessary for the job at hand, with a few

extras that will come in handy later on. Using 602Text, I am able to set down my script as I want it to appear on the finished page, including choosing my font and adding "stage directions" for the drawing stage. I can then save this file in the native WPD format, or if I want to send it to someone else to review, I can save it in Word's .doc format, or simply in plain text (minus the formatting) so that anyone on any machine can read it.

602Text Screenshot

You'll notice by now that what I have in mind for this sample page is rather simple. That's because I have planned this as a promotional page for my online

comic book, *The Journals of Simon Pariah.* That way, I can take the process right from the earliest idea stage right into distribution.... nothing less than the whole meal deal!)

Naturally, I have only used 602 Text as an example for this article. There are several other free text editors out there if you want to go looking for them. Among the notables are:
AbiWord (www.abisource.com)
Open Office (www.openoffice.org)
Easy Office (http://www.e-press.com/)

At this point, you might want to consider some of your font choices. You're going to need a good, readable, yet visually interesting comic book font later on when you letter your work, and if you consider your options now, it will save you from being bogged down later when you just want to get down to it.

There is really only one "comic bookish" font that is standard with a Windows machines, and that is Comic SansMS. While this is not a bad font for the job (in fact, I have recently done one short story entirely in that font), it does not have much visual punch, and does not seem to kern well over large blocks of text, so you might want to consider looking around to see what else is available.

There are literally thousands of fonts available on the internet. There are great display fonts, paragraph fonts, and handwriting-based fonts in any number of places. However, not all of them are suited for comic book work (except as your imagination can make them fit), and in fact, very few of them have been designed that way. While sites like Comicraft (http://www.comicbookfonts.com) offer some very excellent and striking fonts, they can also be very expensive for the beginner. On the other hand, sites like BlamBot (http://blambot.com) offer a unique selection of free fonts designed especially for comic book lettering. There you can find fonts especially designed for dialogue, display usage or titles, as well as basic balloon shapes to help give your word ballons a clean, crisp look. Some other resources you can try for free fonts useful for comics are:
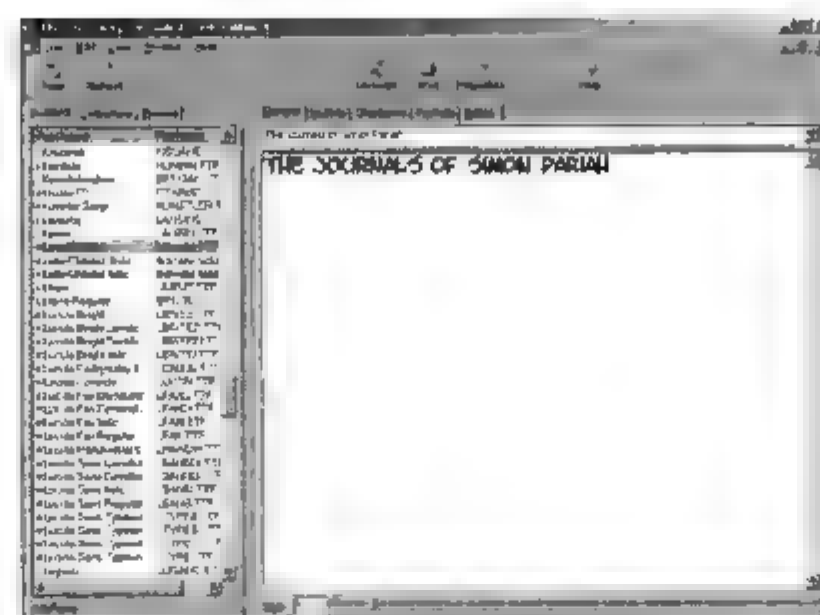The Fonts Zone
(http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Gallery/8992/)
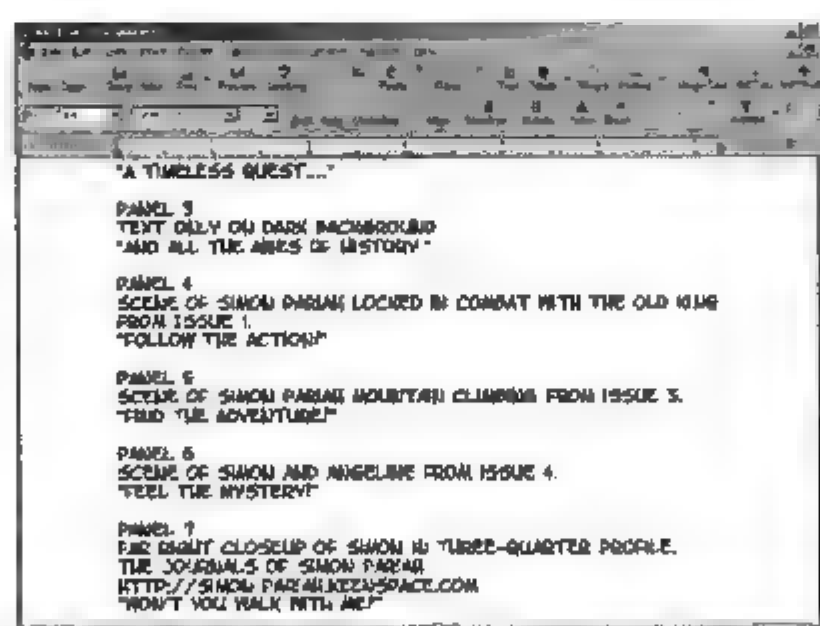Blam Design
(http://hans presto.tripod.com/links004 html)

Having found all these wonderful fonts, you are also going to need some way to manage them. The font applet in the Windows Control Panel just does not cut it when it comes to choosing fonts on the fly, and cannot give you a preview of a font before you install it. Tools such as The Font Thing (http://www.ozemail.com.au/~scef/tft html) or FontPage (http://

bluefive.pair.com/), just to name a couple, are handy little items that will let you quickly browse all the fonts you have installed, and also preview the ones you have not installed yet. I like to use The Font Thing, as it has a quick utility to install or uninstall fonts from the preview window, and you can easily change the size or text of the preview, so I can see exactly how the phrase I want to letter will look.

Font Thing Screenshot

In this case I have chosen to letter the page using the font "Letter-O-Matic," a free font available from Blambot. It has a nice, loose, hand-lettered look that is perfect for the style of this page. A quick download and install through The Font Thing, and I am ready to set my font right in 602Text. Now I can see exactly what my lettering will look like on the page, and fiddle around with relative sizes and positions if I want to.

602Text Screenshot

Naturally, all of this assumes that you have some idea how to write a comic book script. But don't worry if you don't; there are some fine resources out there to assist you with getting your ideas down in a workable format. No doubt you have already seen some of the excellent articles produced by Sketch magazine on writing for comics. Tom Bierbaum, especially, has done some very insightful essays on the topic. A marvelous resource can be found online at http://www.figma.com/howto/. This site has how-to's and tutorials on writing for comics and a number of other important topics, and is definitely worth a visit. Other useful tutorials can be found online at such places as:

ScottMcCloud.com
(http://www.scottmccloud.com/)
The Down the Tubes Comics Section
(http://www.jfree.dircon.co.uk/comics/index.html)
Creating Comics
(http://www.members.shaw.ca/creatingcomics/)
Marc Fleury's Writing Comics
(http://www.panel1.com/mfwc/index.html)

Each of these sites has produced some well-written articles not only on the how-to's of writing for comics, but also the why-to's and the what-for's as well. I would also especially recommend Scott McCloud's site, as his articles on producing comics for the web are very eye opening. Explore some of these sites, and I'm sure you will find something that will inspire or educate you.

Drawing the Comic

Like the man said..."You start with an idea, and a sketch." Any good piece of comic art starts out that way, and computer-created comics are no exception. Over the years a number of tools have been developed for digital art, including some exceptional software packages, graphics tablets, touchpads, pens, and scanners. The thing to remember is that not one, nor any combination of, these tools is a replacement for talent; for simply knowing how to draw. Even if you have the fastest new computer with all the bells and whistles and the most expensive professional level software on the market, if you don't have a basic understanding of how to draw, you might as well be working on a Commodore 64.

So, whether you're producing comics for print or for the web, at some point you are going to have to take pencil and paper in hand and draw something. Whether you just lay out your page and do the whole thing as a digital painting, or design the costumes and work up the finished character in a 3D program, or (as I do), draw the whole page by hand, scan it in and work with it from there, you still need that basic ability to draw a picture.

That being said, once you have done whatever level of drawing you need to do, there is any number of tools available to help you finish, refine, or enhance your artwork.

To start with, you are going to need a way to get your art on the computer. Now, the immediate solution is to run out and buy a scanner, scan the image in at the highest possible resolution, and work with it from there. And while any scanner you buy now will come with utility software that will let you get the most out of that hardware, that does not have to be the only solution. What if you don't have the bucks to shell out for a scanner right away

but still want to give computer comics a try, and need to get your sketch, pencil art, or line art into your machine? Well, there are options. If you want a good high-res scan, you can bring your art to a copy or print shop, and they can do the scanning for you for a small price per page. Sure you still shell out some, but not as much as you would for a good scanner, and you get a cheaper path to finding out if this mode of working is for you.

An even cheaper solution, if you have access to it, is a fax machine. This is an idea I hit upon while producing the second issue of my comic, *The Journals of Simon Pariah*. I didn't have a scanner at the time, but I did work at an office that had access to a fairly good fax machine, and I had some free fax software that I had download onto my home machine. So, I just took the black and white line art and faxed it to my home machine. Most fax software saves incoming faxes in tiff format, which is ideal for working with in graphics applications, so all I had to do was save the incoming fax, and I had a no cost solution to scanning my art! (Just make sure you have your boss's permission to use the fax machine for personal use...right? Right?)

Once you have your comic masterpiece on your computer, then you're going to want the tools to modify it. That's where some of the finer graphics programs come in. Now, understand that when the pros recommend the professional software packages, they know what they're talking about. These tools have earned their reputation by delivering solid results on a consistent basis, and the quality of their output is apparent from pretty much any major comic book.

But if you're not ready to invest in those tools or if you're only going to do some basic work on your pages, then there are free tools available to you that will be more than adequate to the job. Some of the more popular graphics programs available are The Gimp (http://www.gimp.org/), an open source program which has recently been ported to other platforms, Project Dogwaffle (http://www.dogwaffle.com/), an open source program which is constantly improving itself, and Pixia (http://www.ab.wakwak.com/~knight/), a program developed by Japanese programmer Isao Maruoka. This last one seems to have a special appeal for manga artists if the online galleries are any indication, and some very fine work has been produced with it.

For this page, I have used The Gimp, as its features and functions are just as rich as those of Photoshop, and are more than sufficient for the work at hand. Additionally, there is an extensive help file and user support group available online.

First I import the page via scanner as a 600 dpi bitmap, adjust it to RGB, and save it as a tiff file so it is easier to work with in the coloring stage. In many cases, your page will have been prepared as a single piece of artwork. Don't think it has to be this way. One of the great things about a graphics program is the ability to stitch together pieces of art to composite the final page. For this page I took a number of small drawings from my finished stories, and stitched them together onto a predefined page template. In other instances this technique has let me use reference material from a number of different sources and rework drawings, without having to go through a manual cut and paste process to prepare the page beforehand.

Gimp Screenshot

Now that the page is assembled, it has to be colored and lettered. First comes the fun part ..the coloring. Is there any comic book artist who has ever completely outgrown their love of coloring books? Well, if there is, it's not me, and doing up the color for a page of my art is my grown-up version of the coloring book. Once again, The Gimp is my tool of choice here. First, I create a transparent layer set below the art layers to do my coloring on. I set the levels for the black and white layers to 100, 1.0, 200 to sharpen the black and white contrast, then set their mode to multiply. This makes the art layers transparent so the color can show through from below, but the linework is not disturbed. Then I choose my colors and brushes and go to work.

Gimp Screenshot

Now, with 602Text open in the background, I copy the text to the panels. The dynamic text option lets me set font size, color, and style, as well as use more th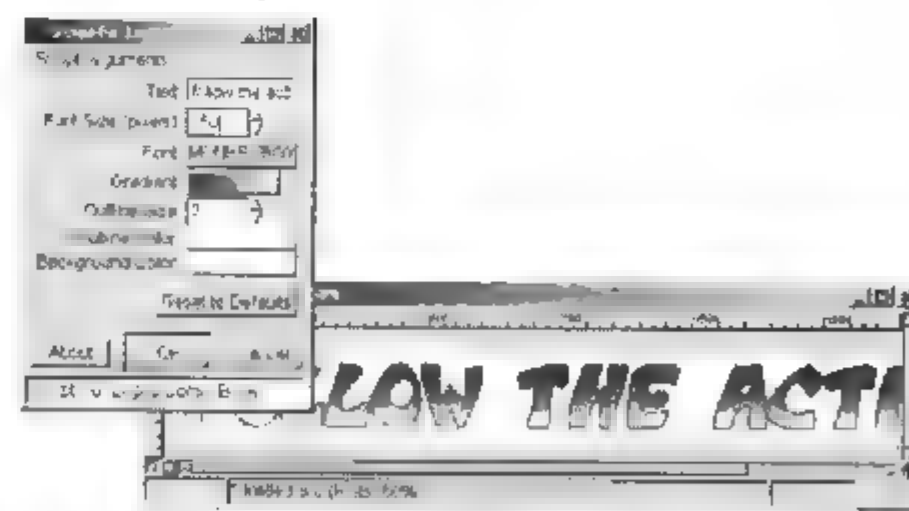an one line of text at a time. The basic option uses the foreground color as the text color, yet still allows for adjusting of font and size. The downside of the basic text option is that it only allows for one line of text at a time, however, the dynamic text feature does tend to crash more often, so either way it's a tradeoff. I should note here that I find that setting font size by pixel rather than point works better in The Gimp, and the text layers scale nicely afterwards if necessary.

Each block of text is rendered as a separate layer, so I turn off visibility on the bottom layer and merge the visible layers to create my text layer. Then I turn the art layer back on and save the file in the Gimp's .xcf format to preserve the layers.

Gimp Screenshot

When this part is done, I then want to create display logos to highlight the features of the book. This is where The Gimp really shines, as its "Script-Fu" functions allow for automatic logo creations using gradient fills on large sized text. In this case I create my display text using (appropriately) the "Comic Book" style, and an "Incandescent" gradient fill on the "Monkeyboy" font that I downloaded from BlamBot. I do three of these, one for each major feature of the page, and my page is assembled and ready to be exported to the next stage.

Gimp Screenshot

The full technical how-to's of this process could probably fill a whole new article, so I'll just refer you to my own teacher on the subject, the World Forge Coloring Tutorial (http://www.worldforge.org/project/newsletters/February2002/Coloring), which describes the process in more detail. Keep in mind that although the names for the functions may differ, the process is basically the same for all graphics programs that use layers.

For other how-to's of coloring for comics I'll refer you to the articles in *Sketch* by Aaron Hubrich, or the online tutorials at:
Figma
(http://www.figma.com/drawing/howto/dbryan/db_color_01.htm)
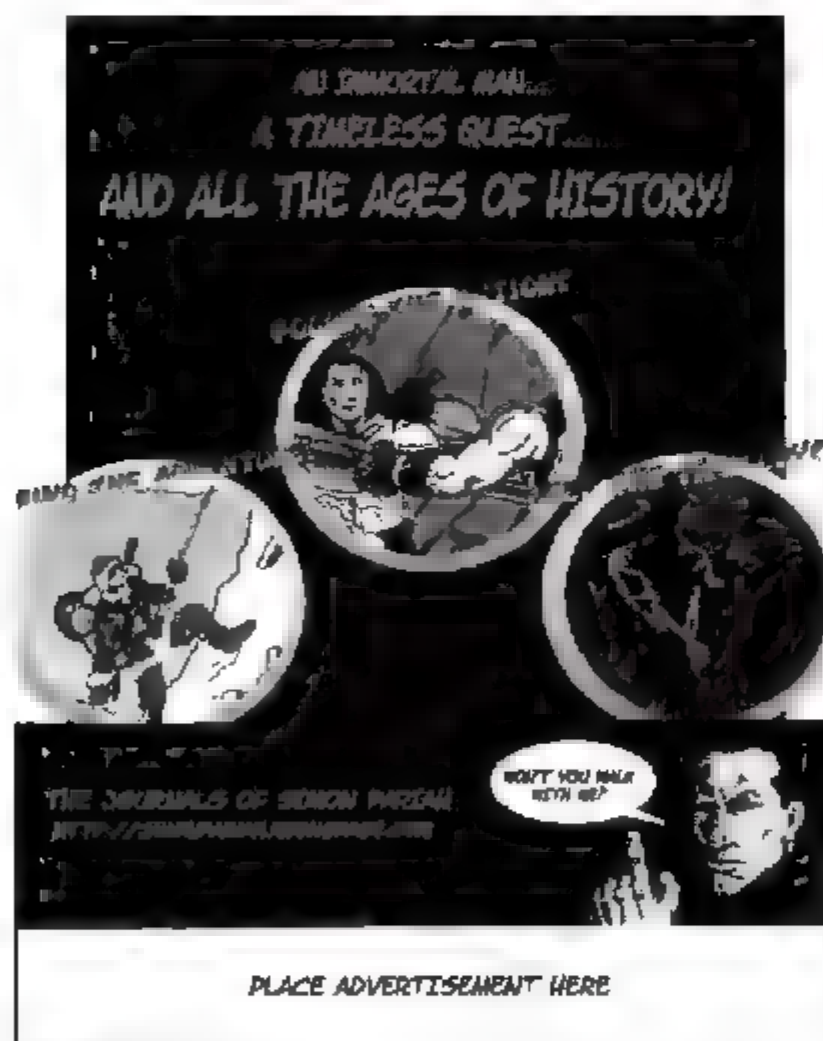Comic Colors
(http://www.comiccolors.com/index1.html)
For an online manual on using Gimp:
(http://manual.gimp.org/).

Suffice to say for now that the end goal is to be able to have the tools and processes down to let you grab your digital paintbrush and follow your imagination. That's mainly what the graphics programs I have mentioned here are for, and I hope one of them will suit your needs. If not, take the time to search around a bit, and I'm sure you'll find something useful.

When the coloring is done I flatten the image and save it as a high res tiff, then shrink the image size to a width of 800 pixels, and save a copy as a high quality jpeg. That way I have two copies of the page; one suitable for printing, the other ready for the web. Now it's all a matter of how I choose to distribute the work.

Promo Sheet

Distributing the Comic

Great work does not exist in a vacuum; how is anyone going to know how good your work is if you don't get it out there? So, now that you've created your masterpiece, you face the problem of distribution, and, depending on where you want to see your book, possibly of printing.

Printing services, while reasonable, can be expensive, and negotiating price with a print shop can be difficult. There are a couple of tricks you can use, however, if you are willing to compromise a little on your end result. One choice is to use printer overstock on paper. One of the biggest expenses at the printer is the paper itself, but every printer has odd items

of paper stock left over from previous jobs that they just cannot seem to clear out. If you're willing to inquire about these, you might be able to get a discount price on the paper stock to lower your overall cost, and possibly add an interesting new look to your comic at the same time.

Another solution is to sell advertising space. Depending on the level of distribution you plan for your first outing, you can approach businesses to offer them advertising space in your book in exchange for a portion of your printing costs. Selling 4 pages at $100 per 1/2 page could offset the price of 1000 copies (but you'd probably have to be a great salesman to get that rate!).

For this project, I have made a deal with a local print shop to donate the price of 100 color copies in exchange for a small amount of adspace at the bottom of the page (which is why you see "PLACE ADVERTISEMENT HERE at the bottom of the page). I've also found a local, independent-friendly comics retailer to agree to give me a small amount of shelf space to distribute the page. This way everybody wins: I get no-cost promotion for my book, the print shop gets low-cost advertising in a market where customers may be likely to want their services (comic creators are usually comic readers, right?), and the retailer gets something he can give away in his shop...everybody loves a freebie!

If you want to go the online route things do get cheaper, depending once again on how much you are willing to compromise. Fortunately, printing costs become irrelevant when publishing web comics, but hosting services become a price issue. If you want to have your own domain name and all the bells and whistles of unlimited storage space, unlimited bandwidth, bulletin boards, and reader response forms, then you are going to have to pay for registration and hosting services. While these are not terribly expensive, keep in mind that you get what you pay for. Companies like EseeHosting (http://www.eseehosting.com) can give you free hosting without all the extras, provided you register your domain name through them. More features will cost you a monthly or yearly fee. On the other hand, many companies, such as NameZero (http://www.namezero.com) can give you low cost domain registration, but do not provide hosting services. Instead, they will forward your registered url to another front page of your choice. If you want, you can then set up free hosting services through someone like Tripod, AngelFire, or Yahoo, and direct your free domain name to your front page there.

My personal choice for hosting is a ser-

vice called KeenSpace (http://www.keenspace.com), a division of Keenspot Comics. Keenspot and Keenspace are hosting services dedicated to online comic strips and books. Assuming they accept your work, they provide unlimited web space and bandwidth, as well as message boards, reporting features, and useful archiving scripts to give your online comics a sharp, professional look. In return, they require you to place an ad banner at the top of each page, from which they will receive the revenue. Their ads are generally tastefully done and not too intrusive, so they won't detract from the look of your page. Check out such online strips as Ian McDonald's Bruno the Bandit (www.brunothebandit.com), Chris Crosby's Superosity (http://www.superosity.com/), or my own book, *The Journals of Simon Pariah* (http://SimonPariah.keenspace.com) to see what they can do.
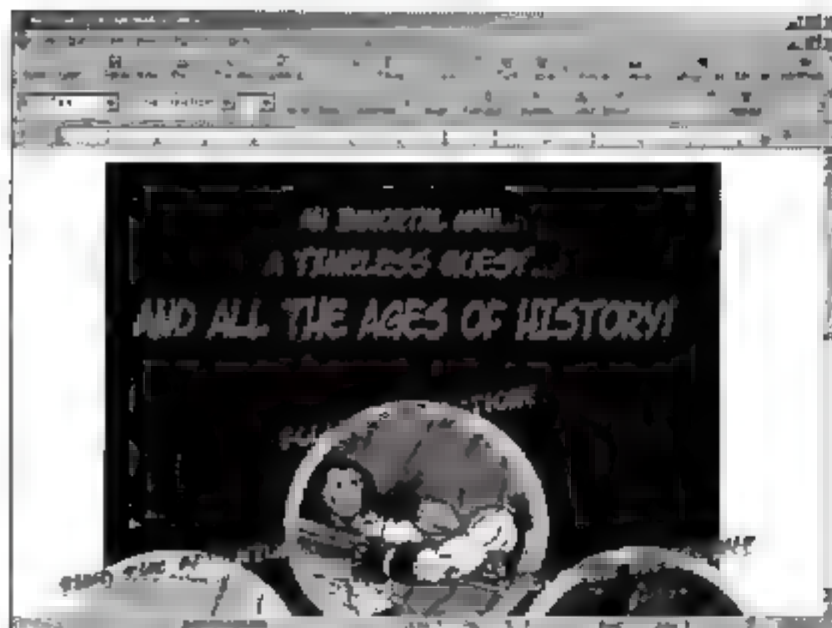
Okay, now that you've figured out which way you want to get your work out to the readers, you're going to need to address the issue of delivery and file formats. If you go to print, you are going to need a good clear file to deliver to the printer. If you decide to go with web distribution, you are going to need a way to create your web pages and a format in which to post your art pages.

I have found that for print, a good high-resolution tiff is preferred for each page. You could spend the money to lay out the book using Adobe Pagemaker or Quark XPress, but I have found that if I number the files sequentially and give my printer a mockup of the book, they are able to do the job from there. However, I should add that I have only presented small print jobs...about the size of a single issue. If your book is longer than this, you might not want to trust to someone else to get it right.

If you have a printer or scanner, you probably received a utility disc with it that has, in addition to the hardware drivers, some light or special edition desktop publishing software. Most often, you can use this to do your layout. If not, don't worry; you've still got a solution at hand.
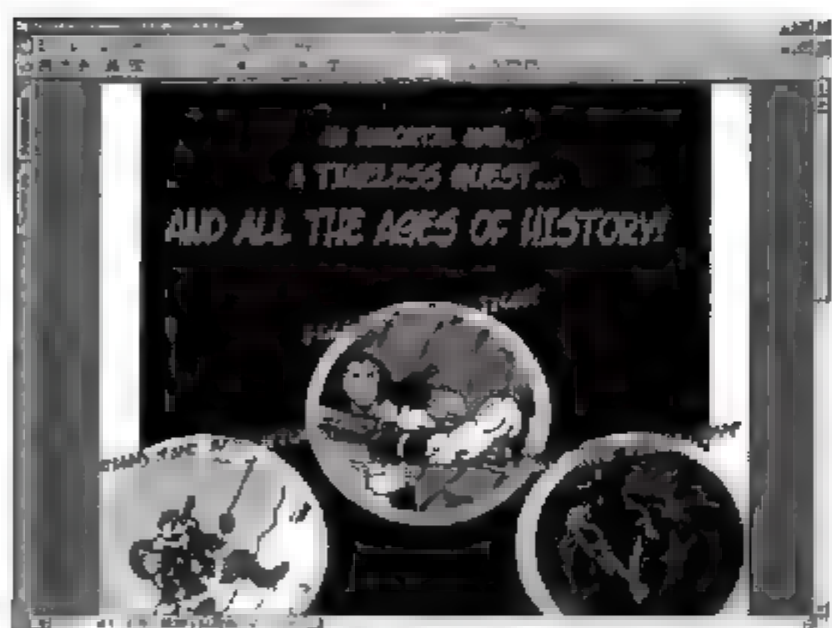
For this, we're going to call 602Text to the fore again. Like most good word processors, it is capable of handling images as well as text. For this job, as it is going to be printed on 8.5" x 11" paper, I have set my margins as close to the edges as I can, and inserted the image file for my art, centered on the document. I then save this file for later use.

Now I'm going to call up a tool that will be useful to you whether you decide to go with online or print distribution. One of the friendliest file formats around is the

602Text Screenshot

Adobe Acrobat pdf format. It is both PC and Mac compatible, and distributes well to either print or web with a relatively small file size. It does require Adobe's Acrobat Reader to be able to view it, but fortunately does not require any expensive software in order to be able to create it. Whenever I want to create a pdf, I use a free utility called pdf995 (http://www.pdf995.com/). This installs itself as a virtual printer onto a Windows machine that allows you to print any file straight into the pdf format It supports itself by launching an advertisement in your browser window for each pdf you create,

Adobe Acrobat Reader Screenshot

but that is a small price to pay. So, I print my doc file to pdf format, and I have a finished product that is ready to either go to the printer or download from my web page.

There are other tools useful for creating webpages that are available for free. HTML editing tools abound on the internet, and I'll let you discover your own if that is what you are interested in. However, if you don't want to take the time away from your drawing board to learn the language, what you need is a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) editor, and while the choices are fewer, there are still some to be had. If you are a user of Netscape's web browser, you will know that they have such a tool built right into the browser as Netscape Composer While not extensively featured, it does let you construct a basic web page easily. Two other WYSIWYG creators that I was able to find with little difficulty were:

SiteGen
(http://www.enersoft.ch/vroot/_sgt/download_2.htm)
Selida
(http://www.amaryllis.8m.com/index.html)

Search around the freeware sites on the internet, and you will probably find more. While they won't have the full functionality of a program like FrameMaker, they will be able to assist you with the basic steps of building a web page.

If you decide to go with web publishing, one other thing you're going to need is a good FTP program to transfer your files to your web server. While Internet Explorer has some FTP functionality built in, if you want added features like account information storage or enhanced directory browsing, you're going to need something stronger. My tool of preference for this is WS_FTP LE (http://www.ipswitch.com/), as it has a simple interface and is quick to load. However, it is not very graphical, and some users might find the layout confusing. There are plenty of other utilities out there to do the same job, including:
Smart FTP
(http://www.smartftp.com/)
Free FTP
(http://brandyware.com/main.htm)
Easy FTP
(http://www.geocities.com/liquidcoresoftware/easyftp/index.html)

Find one that works for you, and get those comics on their way to the net for all to enjoy!

After all that, voila! The page is done! From initial concept to final distribution, it has been done using tools that were easily and quickly available, with a final cost of $0. It should be that easy to produce *all* comics! This is proof that if you want to try your hand at creating comics on your computer you don't need to dip into your hard-earned savings, but can find the tools to get the job done for free, and can have a lot of fun exploring the internet and your own computer while you're at it.

For quite some time now, I have heard many people bemoan comics as a dying art form due to lack of revenues from traditional methods of creation and distribution. The opinion seems to be that if you aren't with the big four, or doing their kind of sales, then you don't have a chance of surviving in the market. I don't think this is necessarily true; I think that the market will always have a place for people who produce quality work, because people always want to read good stories. If any change is needed it is an adaptation to

the new realities of the market, including the fact that many comics are going to be published online, and distributed for free.

This is not a bad thing; it just means the revenue models will have to change. In effect, however, it means that there is once again an explosion in possibility not seen since the decline of printing costs caused the independent market boom of the '80s. I think that the new methods that have come available only open the door to new ideas, and make it easier for people to get in on the ground floor of self-made opportunities. With the tools that are now available, producing comics can be faster, easier, cheaper, and most importantly — fun! Entry into the art form does not have to be a daunting thing, but can be made user-friendly through the use of tools like the ones I have discussed here. Through this opening up of the market, fresh creators, ideas, and solutions can be brought to light, which will hopefully provide the foundation for the next generation of great comics and keep the art form alive for a long time to come.

A final note: An inquiring mind might ask, "Where does he get all those wonderful toys?" As a confirmed net geek and sometime computer consultant, I have been called on many times to find low or no-cost solutions to business and personal computer requirements. As a result, I have made a habit of searching out the best shareware and freeware sites on the internet. By trolling these on pretty much a daily basis I have been able to turn up the software I have referred to in this article, and literally hundreds of other useful items. If you have the time to do some searching and testing of your own, you will probably find the tools to do exactly what you want as well. Some good starting points for your exploration include:
CNet Download.com
(www.download.com)
NoNags Freeware
(www.nonags.com)
Son of Spy's Freeware
(http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Circuit/9810/Soffffffware.html)

There are many more out there, but I have found these always carry the best of the best, and are very user friendly as well. Enjoy your search, and I hope you get some great comics out of it!

Mike is the creator of the online comic book "The Journals of Simon Pariah" www.SimonPariah.keenspace.com

Letters Forum

Well said, Tom Bierbaum,

Comics, particularly super hero comics, have been in an abysmal state for years. Bierbaum addressed one of the most significant issues in super hero comics, that of the improper and insulting portrayal of women in comics in his article in Sketch #16. At least someone has acknowledged the problem. I was beginning to wonder if comic book professionals even knew what real women were like as there was little evidence of this in their stories. The question now is, What, if anything, can be done to fix what's wrong?

Mind you, I'm not questioning the quality of the work when I say the state of comics is abysmal. I've been a professional writer for many years (as my author's pseudonym of Taliesin the Bard may imply), and have also done a little bit, just a little, of cartooning and illustration. I know how hard it is to be a professional, and I admire those who have succeeded.

It is, however, the presentation of the material, the inane and juvenile subject matter, the retelling over and over again of the same stories and same types of stories, against which I rail.

The matter of the portrayal of women characters in comics is a good place to start addressing the overall problem. And correcting it. Recently, at the suggestion of an e-friend ("e-friend" a friend who's first contact is via the internet rather than in person), I have begun reading a collection of essays by Ursula K. LeGuin titled Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places" The book is fascinating, and the essays on women would be, I think, good reading for anyone wanting to write women characters well.

Bierbaum also touched on one of my pet peeves concerning modern comics, and if I may, I'd also like to touch on that subject, though here I will disagree with him. I liked it much better when the good guys in comics were good guys. Wolverine and Punisher may be popular, but, personally, I find them disgusting. These are not super heroes, they're psychotic murderers in the guise of heroes. Bierbaum mentioned his scripting of Legionnaires, which I take to be the modern version of the Legion of Super Heroes, in which some members show prejudice and disrespect for a particular girl who then becomes a super villain because of their attitude toward her.

Wrong. That could not happen. Super heroes are supposed to represent the very best of humanity. They're not just heroes, they're SUPER heroes. I don't expect super heroes to be perfect, but they should at least be tolerant of others. Super heroes should be noble, altruistic and honorable. They should be an example to us ordinary human beings of our potential and possibilities. I guess that's why most of my comics buying these days is of the DC Archives and Marvel Masterworks and Essentials series, reprints of comics from the days when comics were good, and so were the characters that populated their pages.

Tal, Taliesin the Bard
c/o First Tribe Books

Tal,

Lots of strong points, Tal. My advice to the industry, though, isn't so much that comics, or their portrayals of women, are poorly done as that there isn't a very broad range of product speaking to a lot of different sensibilities. In that spirit, I think it's fair enough to write about "heroes" who don't really measure up to the term, as long as the more classic heroes you describe aren't pushed out of existence as part of the deal. Certainly, those more traditional heroes enchanted generations of kids, many of whom became lifelong comics fans. And now that those more traditional heroes have been mostly missing for a decade or two, it's probably no coincidence that there just aren't as many fans around and the business is shrinking.

Tom Bierbaum

Sketch,

I would just like to say that I was incredibly amazed by the J. Scott Campbell interview in Sketch 16. It was a very informative and in depth interview. I've never seen an interview deal with issues like those that I'm interested in. I would also like to say that I ordered that issue as a back issue, and it got to my house in almost no time at all. You guys are totally on top of things and yes . . You guys rock. Very impressive.

Thanks again
David

David,

We've had our rough spots and taken some shots – some deserved, some overzealous, many simply petty, but we're big enough to take the criticism, especially when we have it coming. We've always been open to criticism, and we're always trying to improve the magazine and give you readers better content. And we're succeeding. We appreciate the kind words!

I'm very glad you enjoyed the J. Scott Campbell piece. He's a dream interview: one of the most gracious and open creators you could hope to speak with, and truly interested in sharing his talent and techniques (more of a rarity than you might think) with the Sketch audience. I've mentioned it here numerous times before; don't hesitate to pick up his terrific Danger Girl Sketchbook. We hope that Scott will return to our pages in the very near future.

Sketch moves into 2003 with a bimonthly schedule, packed with major marquee stars and seasoned pros, as well as giving some much-needed exposure to some fresh new faces with quality work. There are new people out there with experience and vision to share, and we look forward to giving them this opportunity. Although we've had an occasional subscription lapse, sales are healthy, and interest from pros and casual enthusiasts is up. As always, we thank you readers and retailers for your interest and support of our efforts.

We'll continue to give you the type of interviews, technique exploration and material examination you've come to expect from us and step it all up to the next level. Thanks again, David. More and more creative folks are Sketching, and we're excited and proud to continue to serve the comic book creative community as we move into our fourth big year.

Flint

Hello,

First off I want to thank you for the commentary on your website, it reassured me a lot. Well, to start off, I've just recently begun placing my drawings into my scanner and using photoshop to color my artwork. I use a 0.5mm mechanical pencil, which I have grown attached to, but I can't get the lines to be perfectly solid thin-line black. I also tried using a regular bic pen, and the results came out the same way. If you can tell me a few pointers on what kind of pencil or instrument I should use to create a thin perfect line it would help me a lot. Thanks.

Dan

Dear Dan,

You might want to try some Multiliners (drawing pens) with metal tips. The metal tips give you an even line every time. Several pens are made by companies such as Alvin (Penstix/Tech Lliners), Sakura (Microns), Copic (Multiliners), and Deleter (Line Pens, as well as many others. I prefer the Deleter Line Pens because of their solid black ink and the wide, comfortable grip.

Mc

BLUE LINE PRO'S SKETCH #17

CHUCK DIXON
KEEPING IT REAL

BEAU SMITH
THE BIG KEEP

MITCH BYRD
LIGHTING YOUR PENCILS

TOM BIERBAUM
HUMOR IN YOUR WRITING

PAT QUINN
TERM YOUR INKING

AARON HORBRICH
DIGITAL COLORING COMPUTER CARTOONING

VIOLENT MESSIAHS
HURRICANE HONES THEIR SCALPEL

UNCANNY X-MEN ARTIST RON GARNEY

A big Sketch "thank you" shout out to X-Mike Marts for his help with last issue's illustration needs! You can never see enough Ron Garney - we needed some more last minute imagery, and Mr. Marts came through for us with a speed and aplomb that was, well, somehow more than human?! Hmm...After working on numerous titles as Spider-Girl and Deadpool, it's no wonder he's now X-Editor on Uncanny X-Men and the New X-Men, among others. X-Fast and X-professional, he's ...X-Marts! Thank you, Mutant Master!

The Universe at your Finger Tips

Thoughts on Scripting Comic Books

When They Hate Your Comic

I remember once in a copy shop meeting a writer who was nervous about an upcoming workshop she was about to attend, where her work would be aggressively critiqued — ripped apart — by other aspiring writers. I remember telling her that I'd probably never subject myself to such torture. I'd simply rather be an inferior writer than deal with that kind of critical assault. That, of course, may be the wrong attitude to take, because every writer, no matter how established, can use insightful criticism to get the most out of his or her talent. Or it might be the right attitude to take — most of us have trouble keeping our confidence up and doing our best work if we're subjected to heaps of criticism.

By and large, beginning writers need to swallow their egos and take a lot of direction and correction. But what about someone who's been paying his or her dues for a while and is starting to break in — someone who's getting work out onto the market and is now on the receiving end of a whole new level of scrutiny and criticism? Should this emerging writer ignore and dismiss the people who hate his or her comic, or seek them out to become a better writer? A few thoughts:

1. Know Yourself.

There are people out there who thrive on criticism and conflict, and some of them think that's the *right* way, the *only* way, for a writer to get the most out of his talents. And for them, it probably is. But maybe you're not them. If you're more easily rattled by criticism, if your confidence is more easily shaken, then you may prefer to avoid, downplay, and ignore your critics.

The writers who thrive on conflict may tell you that shying away from criticism makes you a weaker person, a less worthy writer, and less committed to your message. That s, of course, self-serving on their part. If you happen to enjoy battling those who don't ike your writing, fair enough. But if that's not you, don't let anyone convince you that confronting and dueling with your critics is the only way.

Observe yourself, and see what makes you produce your best work. If getting your efforts ripped apart motivates you and improves your work, so be it. But if criticism drains your confidence and enthusiasm and makes you a weaker writer, it's your job to figure that out and find ways to deal with criticism that won't hurt your performance.

I once had a successful artist explain to me that he starts an assignment by telling the editor that positive feedback will help him do his best work and negative feedback will lead him to do poorer work. I was surprised and impressed by the boldness of this art'st, and realized what he was saying describes exactly how operate. Most of us might be too timid to actually tell this to an editor, but if you know that's how *you* work, then do what you can to fill your world with positive feedback.

Obviously, a beginner can't afford to say this kind of thing to an editor. Note I said this was a *successful* artist. If you're a neophyte, this kind of approach is at least years off. The point is to examine how you do your best work and develop attitudes and mental approaches tailored to your creative personality.

2. Let Those Who Think Criticism Is Great Put Themselves on the Receiving End.

Every once 'n a while, my five-year-old son w ll, in a didactic voice, tell my seven-year-old daughter how important sharing is. Of course, he's always doing this when she's got something he wants. Somehow, when the situation is reversed, th's important principle becomes irrelevant to him. Which is the way things work when you're five years old.

But sometimes it seems like that's how it works for advocates of merciless critic'sm. You need to have *your* work carefully scrutinized for any flaws, but look out if you find something wrong with *their* work, or even their critic'sm. You'd be surprised how often someone very bluntly dismisses something we've written and, if we point out some inconsistency or illogic to their crit'cism, they'll be offended that we should be so negative toward their critical efforts. They seem to want immunity from the very kind of negative reaction they're giving us.

3. Criticism Can Be a Gift, Too.

All of that said, few of us can do our best work unless we get some impartial feedback from insightful third parties.

We all get immersed in our projects, and before long may find it nearly impossible to judge our work from the perspective of our audience. A writer needs to hear what others think to understand how well he's reaching people who don't happen to live inside his head.

So...

4. L sten to Impartial Third Parties.

Pay attention to those who are giving you candid, objective opinions, who have no stake in beating you down. And by the same token ..

5. Do Your Best to Ignore People Who Have a Motivation for Beating You Down.

It sounds paranoid and goofy to even imagine people out there who *want* you to fail or who want to force you to write in a different way. But as I've discussed ad nauseum in earlier columns, today's comic industry has more than its share of fans and even pros who have a pretty narrow definition of what a comic book can be. And many of them seem to feel a moral obligation to heckle, ridicule, and attack all projects that violate that definition. There are people who simply want your particular comic to be the way they want it to be.

It might be as simple and specific as wanting a certain pair of characters to get romantically involved, or as broad as wanting your whole series to have a darker or lighter tone. But some of these people can make it their life's passion to convince you you're a failure as a writer unless you wr'te the specific comic they want to read. And still others simp y want you to fail because there's always someone who takes pleasure in seeing someone up on the public stage take a tumble.

The point isn't to condemn these people. They're a fact of life, and part of what you have to deal with if you want to work in this business. The point is to develop a thick skin. Let these people have their say; know they're entitled to it and do your best to ive w th them or forget them or ignore them.

You'll never please most of these people, and if you do, they'll just be replaced by a new group upset that now you're doing things different from the way *they* liked it

If you don't accept the inevitability of negative feedback and instead try to make all your critics happy, you'll end up second-guessing everything you do and paralyzing yourself as a writer. It's been my observation that the best writers spend very little time worrying about the people out there who don't like their work. Part of the reason they're so good is they focus on meet ng their own standards, not someone else's.

And yet..

6. Even Your Most Unfair Critics Can Serve a Purpose.

On those days when you just don't feel like turning on the computer, or when you know a scene isn't really working but you just don't have the energy to pull it apart and figure out what's wrong, or when you know you ought to call up an editor and try to get some work; these are the days to remember those vicious critics out there who don't like your work at all. Let their negativity fire you up a little, motivate you to do your absolute best work, and to stick to your guns and do it your way.

And positive feedback can play an important role in boosting morale as well. On those days when the negative voices are getting the best of you, when you're down in the dumps and feeling like you can't do anything right, pull out a few of those rave letters from the past and remind yourself that you've done some pretty damn good work in your day.

7. How Do You Know When a Criticism Is Valid and When the Critic Is Just Wrong?

Well, you don't. You just have to exercise your judgement. And part of being a good writer is training yourself to be very good at objectively judging your work and criticisms of it. When you're criticized, judge the source, judge his or her motivation, and listen to your gut. If what the critic is suggesting feels right for your project it probably is, and if it feels wrong, you need to just forget it and let this critic go out and write his own comic book.

8. Work to Understand Your Critics.

It's a funny thing, but in our everyday lives few of us deal directly with and get to know super-villains, or mass murderers, or maniacal despots. When it comes time to write interesting, believable, human villains, a lot of us can only guess at what kinds of people are truly villainous, or rely on secondary accounts that are the same information all the other writers have access to. But in our everyday lives, each and every one of us comes into contact with people who are nasty, mean-spirited, and sometimes downright cruel, and the more we can examine those lives first-hand and project them onto the antagonists in our stories, the more those antagonists will be human and new to the readership.

For a lot of us writers, one of the best first-hand sources of insight into negative human behavior is the collection of critics that's out there slinging abuse at our work. If, instead of simply feeling contempt for your critics, you step back and start figuring out what makes them tick and what makes them so adamantly opposed to what you're trying to do, you may pick up some insights into human conflict that will bring your fictional adversaries alive in the readers' eyes.

We wrote a multi-issue *Legion of Super-Heroes* story featuring the immensely powerful sorcerer Mordru. We tried very hard to make him both a colossally evil adversary, and one whose hatreds had a cause and a logic to them that made the reader maybe understand and recognize a little humanity in his inhumanity. Our source for this take on the character had a lot to do with people who were being pretty nasty toward our work at that time. It's not in our nature to view our critics as bad people, so we worked hard to understand how and why they were so opposed to what we were trying to do, and in that effort we found ways to understand and explore what this super-villain was trying to do.

Now if you want, you can be mean-spirited about this. You can just make your villains stand ins for people you don't like, make them irredeemably evil and feel like you're getting some sort of revenge in the deal. I don't think that's a great idea for a couple reasons. One is that you're going to end up with a cardboard villain that will probably bore a lot of your readers. Another is that if the character ends up being recognizable as the person you don't like, that person just might hire an attorney and make trouble. No, they really wouldn't have a case if you disguised the characterization enough, but you can spend an awful lot of money defending yourself against even the stupidest legal actions out there.

And that's just one of the reasons I advise...

9. Don't Make Enemies.

It's a very natural reaction to dislike your critics and to fight with them, but there's really very little up side to it, and there can be a tremendous down side.

To begin with, you may think you're passionate about your work and that you can overwhelm the passion of any of your critics. But I'd never assume you have a deeper passion than someone who can work themselves into a hateful rage over a comic book. If you're a pro, you've probably long ago learned there are things in life more important than having a comic book come out exactly the way you want it to...things like getting enough work to pay the bills. But some of the fans who'll go after your work haven't yet figured out that real life really is more important than the exact content of a comic book. And it just isn't a good idea to wave a red flag in front of this kind of person.

Beyond that, many of these critics can be very quickly turned into allies with just a few kind words and a little acceptance. No, you're not going to get them to change their taste or ignore creative blunders, but most people are prone to getting along with and rooting for people who show them a little respect and acknowledgement.

That certainly doesn't work with everyone, but even when you're dealing with a 100% jerk who's 100% wrong, it's not in your interest to get stuck in a protracted fight with this person. You already know you're right, and he'll always think he's right, so you can spend hours and hours battling this demon and accomplishing nothing except creating a huge distraction from your work.

There's no point in giving the 100% jerks of the world this victory. Find as kind a way as you can muster of saying, "You could be right, thanks for your opinion," and move on.

10. What Happens When Those Critics Are in the Industry and Can Hurt Your Career?

It's one thing to deal with hostile letter-writers, and quite another to deal with publishers, editors and fellow creators who are telling you your work's lousy.

First off, you've got to give a little more weight to the opinions of people who are in the business and presumably speak from some experience and expertise. Really consider the possible validity of these criticisms and the chance that, however mean-spirited these people may seem, their ultimate interest might be to improve your work and help out the industry in general.

Sometimes you'll find these people really know what they're talking about, and sometimes you'll find they just want your work to come out the way they think it should be. So you've got to gradually learn the difference...listen to the people who know what they're talking about and, as much as possible, ignore and co-exist with the fellow pros that don't. As unrewarding as a fight with a fan might be, a fight with a fellow pro can be infinitely more damaging. It's a pretty small business controlling relatively few opportunities, and having one or two influential people working against you is a luxury most writers can't afford if they expect to keep getting work.

As for telling the difference between the pros who really have some good advice and those who are just trying to impose their vision on yours, once again you have to discern the motivation behind the criticism and judge accordingly. In general, if someone's trying to tell you there's one and only one right way to do it, that's somebody who doesn't want your voice to get out there, and listening to him is a mistake. Listen rather to the people who, even if they don't like your work, are pointing you toward techniques that will help you do the best job possible of telling your stories in your voice.

Certainly when I have a prospective writer show me work that I don't particularly like, I'll try to say right up front something like, "This isn't my kind of story, and I'm not sure I'm really qualified to figure out how it should work," so that creator can put my criticisms into the proper context. All of my advice may end up working against what this creator is trying to accomplish, and that doesn't do either of us any good.

11. It's Good to Get In the Habit of Saying, "You're Right, I Screwed Up."

It's never been easy for me to admit to being wrong, but in a creative career as well as real life, the ability to do so can work wonders.

Obviously, none of us is perfect, and especially when we're trying to establish ourselves in a new career, we'll make a lot of mistakes. When we do, it can sure feel like admitting to that mistake will make us look incompetent. But in fact, quickly and comfortably admitting to a mistake can often make you look like an old pro who knows he can take the blame for something and not worry about it.

Yes, some people will pounce on such an admission and try to kill you with it, but in those instances the sooner you own up to your mistake the less damage those people can do to you.

And if you do end up paying a great price because you were professional enough to accept the blame for a mistake, then you're better off out of that situation. It's proven itself to be an unprofessional operation, and you'll ultimately find a better situation by making sure you behave professionally and ending up in a place where such behavior is rewarded.

12. Sometimes What Pleases the Most Passionate Fans Is What Turns Away the Larger Audience.

Your most intense fans tend to want certain things - an emphasis on internal consistency, depth of storyline, and intense characterization - that can make a project difficult for new readers to get into. And a comic that expects to be healthy over the long haul needs to be constantly recruiting fresh new readers into the fold, so accessibility and broad appeal are always a good idea.

The most passionate fans tend to have other interests. For example, they sometimes want to see seminal storylines resolved, only to find themselves quickly bored after the tension of those plotlines has been resolved. Who thought *Moonlighting* was better after David and Maddie got together? Did *Spider-Man* get more interesting after Peter and Mary Jane were married? Yes, there's a reason *The Fugitive* flopped in syndication after David Jansen cleared himself in the series finale. Passionate fans can find themselves yearning for some development that may ultimately put an end to their passion. To paraphrase the catch phrase, "Be careful what you wish for, you just might find yourself bored with what you get."

And there's another bit of logic you have to deal with: the intense fans are the most likely fans to buy the comic no matter what you do with it. And the most casual fans are the ones most likely to step up and give you additional sales if you cater to their needs. It only makes business sense to devote more time to figuring about what wins over the casual fan than the passionate fan.

Of course you can and should respect those passionate fans, and derive inspiration and guidance from them. They know and understand the series better than just about anyone else you'll ever get feedback from. But it's probably also a good idea to try and make them understand how much the survival of the concept they love depends on you not giving them a great deal of what they're asking for.

As an aside, some who know my work will consider it ironic that I'm urging simple, accessible writing to attract casual readers since my wife and I dialogued what just might be the most complex comic ever published, the Keith Giffen-plotted run of *Legion of Super-Heroes* that started in the late 1980s and ran through the early '90s.

But I've heard from lots of people who picked up the Legion at that very point and didn't feel like they were at a disadvantage to the long-time Legion readers. While the book was extremely complex, a lot of what was confusing to Legion fans involved their attempts to place events into the context of Legion history, something new readers didn't have to worry about. Long-time readers may have had trouble remembering that the character named Rokk was the guy who used to be Cosmic Boy, but to a new reader Rokk was just Rokk, and it really didn't matter what his code used to be. Thus, some of the new readers seemed to have an easier time keeping track of things than the long-time Legion fans.

I guess what I'm saying is that there's nothing wrong with complex comics, but if you're working on a long-term franchise, try to avoid making its complexity more daunting for potential new fans than the old fans. Our strategy with the Legion was to try and work in a million little historical references and to really try and make everything fit in very tightly with established Legion lore, but to make all of that virtually invisible and irrelevant to the casual reader. If somebody spotted one of those subtle continuity bits and pointed it out in a letter, we'd acknowledge it and congratulate them on their mastery of Legion history. If a casual fan was into it enough to read the letters pages, we figured by then they wouldn't mind finding out there were some hidden layers to what they were reading that the longer-term fans were picking up on.

We tried (apparently with only moderate success, given sales that were good but not great) to layer the series so that it could be read and enjoyed on one level by a Legion novice, on another by a casual Legion fan, on another by a rabid fan who'd been around a couple years, and another by a rabid fan who'd been around for decades. When we did it right, none of those types of readers needed to even notice there were deeper layers than what they were aware of at that moment.

The strategy was to give everyone a chance to enjoy this complex, ambitious

It's never fun to get negative feedback, but do your best to take it in stride

comic, and then reward the long-time fans with little touches that didn't punish the new fans. Then as the novices started noticing in the letters pages that there were tie-ins to the past decades of Legion lore, a few of them might start seeking out those back issues and maybe getting themselves hooked on the entire history of the Legion and maybe becoming lifelong Legion fans. And when people criticize us for going to all that trouble for little touches that most readers never noticed and some found distracting, our response was that for us, it wasn't trouble, it was a lot of fun. We happen to know Legion history pretty well, and loved it. It was part of a dream-come-true experience for us to use treasured little bits of the Legion's past in that run of the book.

With almost any other concept, we wouldn't have had that kind of historical knowledge and couldn't have worked in those kinds of bits. But part of being a good writer is to make the most of the particular qualities you bring to any one assignment, and that's what we tried to do when we were on the Legion.

Not everyone liked it, but, as you'll discover in this business, you're never going to make everyone happy

13. Remember, Making All the Readers Happy Isn't Your Job.

Your job is to get lots of people to buy the comic and keep buying it into the future. So focus on that daunting challenge, and recognize that the inevitable negative response you receive doesn't mean you're goofing up. The best writers in the industry get a lot of negative response too. But they keep focused on the real job and don't spend a lot of energy worrying about things they can't control, like the critics.

PAT QUINN'S
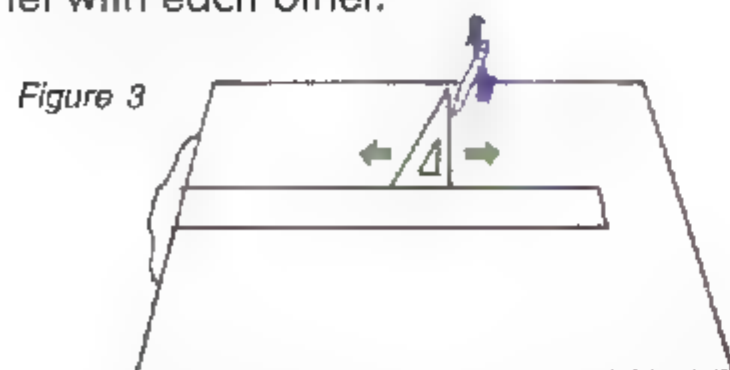## The Basic One
Point Perspective

Hey, Sketchers! As many of you already know, we've run articles on perspective in the past (some of them by me, not coincidentally) [see more of Pat's perspectives on perspective in Sketch # 15 and Sketch # 16 – ed.]. But we've had numerous requests to start at the beginning of perspective technique, and really sort the topic out and lay it on the line…the horizon line, no doubt. So if this is the first time you've picked up Sketch – or are just ready for more perspective tips and tricks - this is a good place to start! We're going back to basics to talk about the nuts and bolts of one - point perspective.

Figure 1

You'll need a pencil, a T-square, a triangle (specifically a triangle with a ninety degree turn), and a ruler…and of course some imagination and patience (Fig. 1).

Figure 2

Let's start with a quick word on using these tools. I'm assuming that we're all working at some sort of table that has at least one flat side, so if you're not, you may want to get to a table. You should also have your paper fixed so it doesn't move. You can do this with thumbtacks or tape. For your pencil choice you may want to use a harder lead (like a 2H) that will produce a light line, or use a non-photo blue pencil. Either way, you should be aware that there will be tons of extra lines on your paper, and some these lines you aren't going to need or want. Luckily, most comics are inked so any lines are going to be erased anyway. Some artists even draw their perspective lines on the back of the page and then put the paper on a light box, that way they can draw on the front of the page without worrying about all the extra lines and erasing. Fig 2 shows us that the T-square's longer side goes over our drawing surface, while the shorter side rides along the edge of the table. This helps us draw horizontal lines that will be parallel with each other.

Figure 3

When we add the use of a (right) triangle as in Fig 3, we can add parallel vertical lines to our drawing. When you have perfectly vertical and horizontal lines meet you can call those lines perpendicular to each other, because they form a ninety degree, or "right" angle.

Figure 4

Our ruler could really be any tool that has a straight edge. You may find that your vanishing point is all the way across the table, so you might even need a yardstick for a ruler - or perhaps your vanishing points are close together and you need to use a smaller straight edge, like the one on your triangle. Any straight edge will do as long as you can keep one corner of it on your vanishing point and use it to draw straight lines (Fig. 4).

All right, let's get started with some explanations of perspective terms. To do any perspective drawing, there are some drawing techniques that we use that will never appear in the final drawing. First off we have the *horizon line*, or *eye-level line*. This line, which we will show as a dotted black line, is there to show us how high or low we are looking at an object or scene. The *horizon line* goes through our drawing and continues on forever to either side. Along that horizon line are *vanishing points*. A *vanishing point* can appear anywhere along the horizon line, and even above or below the horizon line. *Vanishing points* are what we use to make lines *converge*, or get closer together, so we can create the illusion of distance in a flat drawing. Our vanishing point will appear as big black dots, and colored lines will represent the converging lines. Those same converging lines will also be part of the objects that we will be drawing.

Still with me? Great! Let's keep going and get some ideas about *one-point perspective*.

Figure 5

In Fig. 5 there is a drawing of a cube in one-point perspective. We know that it is one-point perspective, because there is a flat side facing us. Notice that the horizon line is above the cube, which means that we can see the side of the cube that is facing us, and the top of the cube.
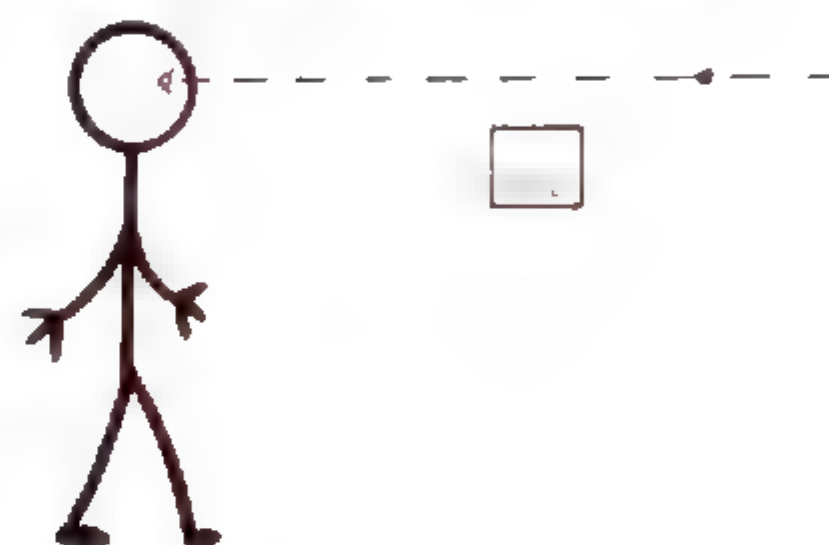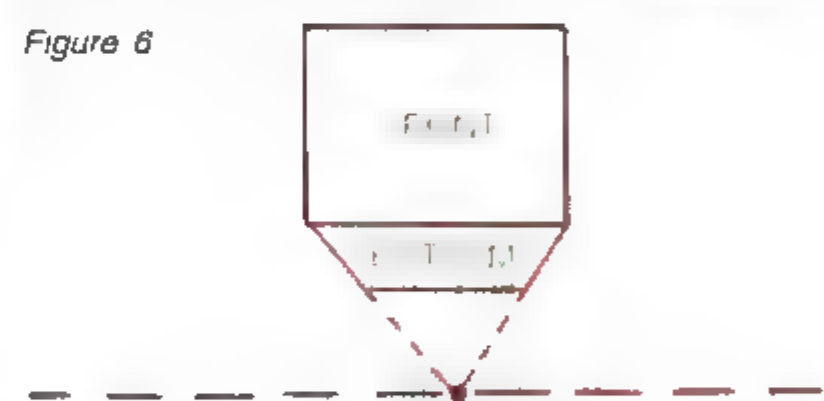
Figure 5A

This is meant to represent that if we had a cube in front of us that it would be lower than our eyes, just like in Fig 5A.

Figure 6

What if the horizon line was below the cube? We have Fig 6 to show us what happens. As you can see, we still see the front side of the cube, but now we see the bottom of the cube too!
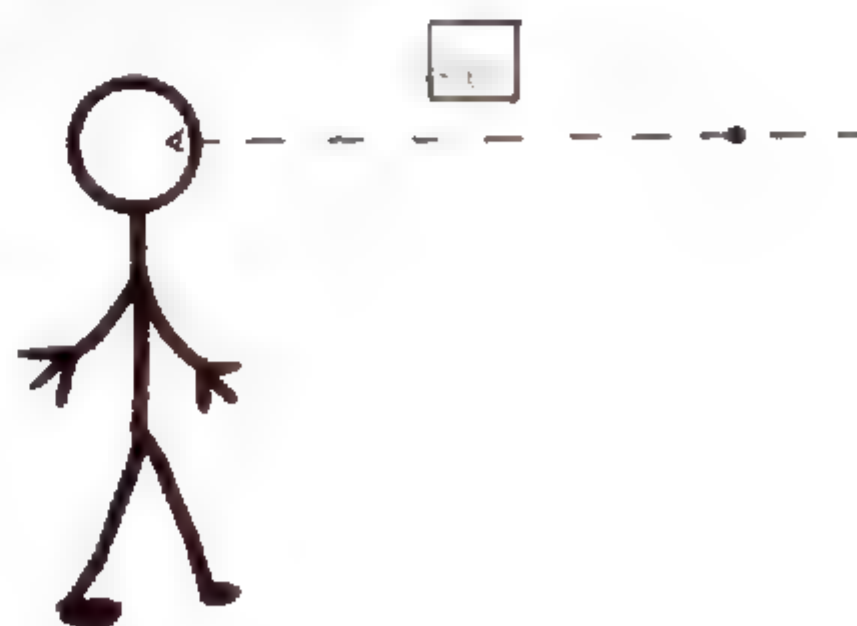
Figure 6A

Having the horizon line lower means that the cube in front of us is higher than our eyes, as we can see in Fig 6A.

And what about the vanishing point? In both drawings, we can see that there is only one vanishing point along the hori-

zon line hence the title one-point perspective. This one vanishing point helps us make two of the sides converge. Only two sides are converging because our cube is centered over, or under, that vanishing point. So what happens when the cube isn't centered on, or by, the vanishing point? Let's move on and find out.
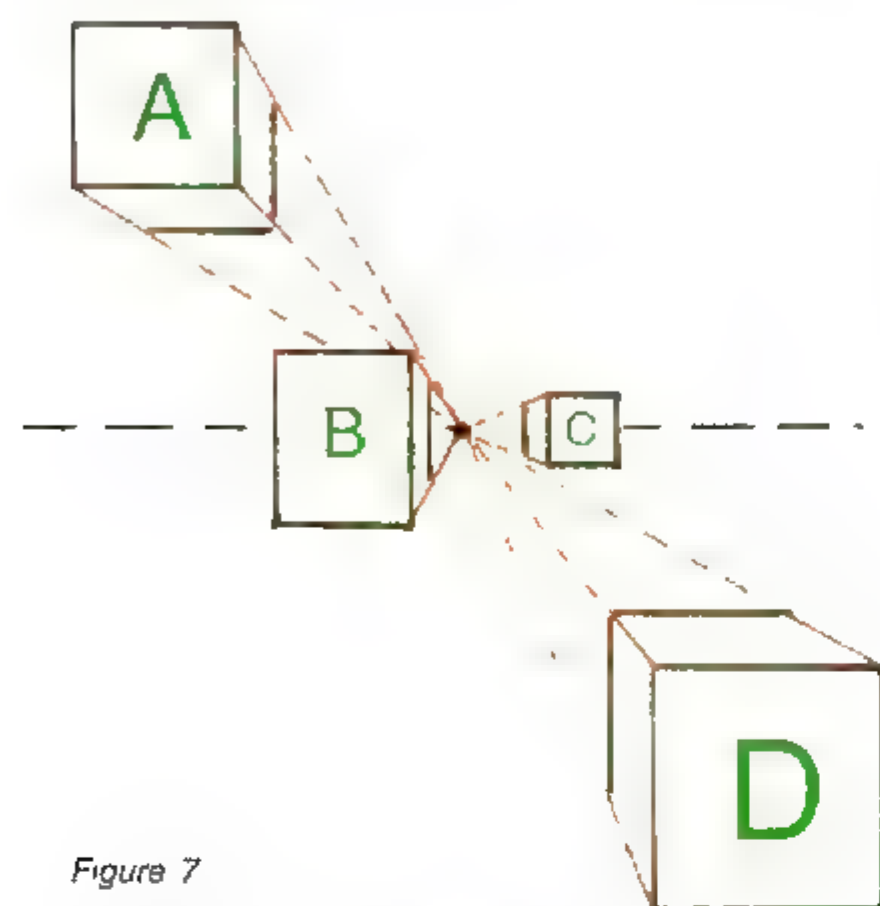

Figure 7

Check out Fig 7. We have four different cubes in different places around our horizon line and vanishing point! We know these cubes are still in one-point perspective since there is still one flat surface facing us. See how cube A is above the horizon line, and it's also above and to the left of the vanishing point. This means that we can see another surface of the cube, and another side converges to the vanishing point. Look at cube D - the same thing is happening there, but this time the cube is below the horizon line, and below and to the right of the vanishing point. How about cubes B and C? The horizon line runs right through the middle of them, so we can't see the tops or bottoms of those cubes, only one extra side.

Can you tell that these cubes appear to be different sizes? What if I told you that they really aren't? That's what the illusion of perspective is all about! It's basically taking objects that are closer to you seem bigger, and objects that are far away from you seem smaller. Try this little experiment: Stand at one end of a long hallway, like at school or an office. Look at how small the other end of the hallway appears to be! If you hold your hand in front of you, you can pretend to pinch whatever is at the other end. Now walk down that hall...as you walk, you'll notice that it appears to get bigger until it reaches "normal" size. Well, this isn't really the case at all, it's just something funny that happens between our eyes and our brains. We know that the hallway is the same size all the way down, it just looks like it gets smaller. Using perspective in your drawings helps capture this illusion.

Figure 7A

Look at Fig 7A to see how those cubes really are the same size, some are just closer to the viewer than others. If we look down on the cubes in Fig. 7B, we can see how the cubes sit to the left or right of the viewer. (Just for the heck of it, turn your magazine upside down and look at Fig 5, Fig 6, and Fig 7...the perspective still works!)

Figure 7B

Wow. That covers the *idea* of one-point perspective, but how do we actually draw something using one-point perspective? Let's find out.

Figure 8A

Let's start by making a horizon line and picking one spot to be our vanishing point; I did mine in Fig 8A. We should keep things simple for right now, so let's start with a

Figure 8B

square below the horizon line like in Fig 8B. Use your T-square and triangle to make sure that your square is perpendicular. Once you have the square drawn, take your ruler (or whatever straight edge tool you want to use) and draw some converging lines from the vanishing point to the

Figure 8C

top corners of the square. You can see how I did mine in Fig 8C; the converging lines are drawn in red. Now it's time to make the top of the cube. We have our converging lines that make the sides, so let's pick a place to draw a line that will finish the top of the cube. Grab that T-square again to help you with that back line, we want it to

Figure 8D

be parallel with the front of the cube. With your back line in place you can erase the extra information like the horizon line, vanishing point, and converging lines, and you will be left with a cube in perspective (Fig 8D)!

One-point perspective isn't just for drawing cubes. Let's try to use one-point perspective to draw an actual scene! I think we'll go with the old "railroad tracks and telephone poles moving back toward the horizon" - it's tried and true and effective. We'll use the same steps we just went over, and some new ones as well. Since we are drawing a scene, try and think of it as drawing the inside of the cube, or the inside of a room.

Figure 9A

Starting with Fig 9A, I've set up my horizon line and vanishing point on my "piece of paper"...I'm pretending that the blue square you see there is my piece of paper. As you can see, I decided to make my horizon line high on the page. I did this because I know that I want to be able to see more of the ground, and less of the sky.
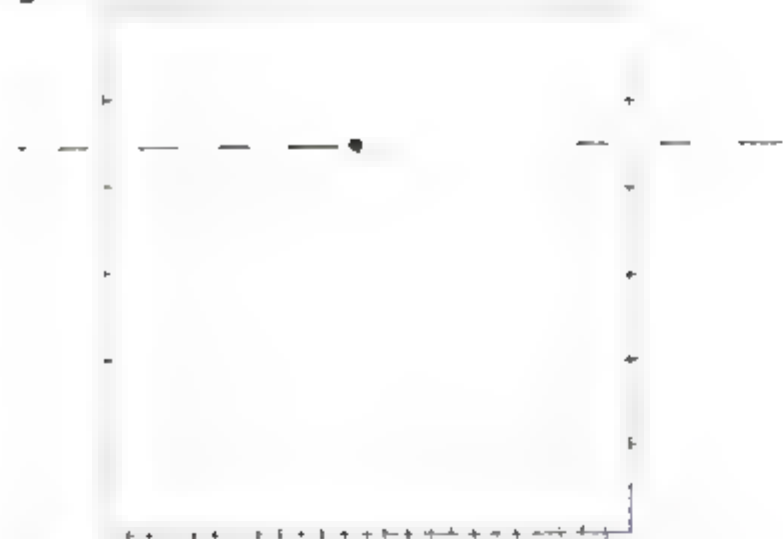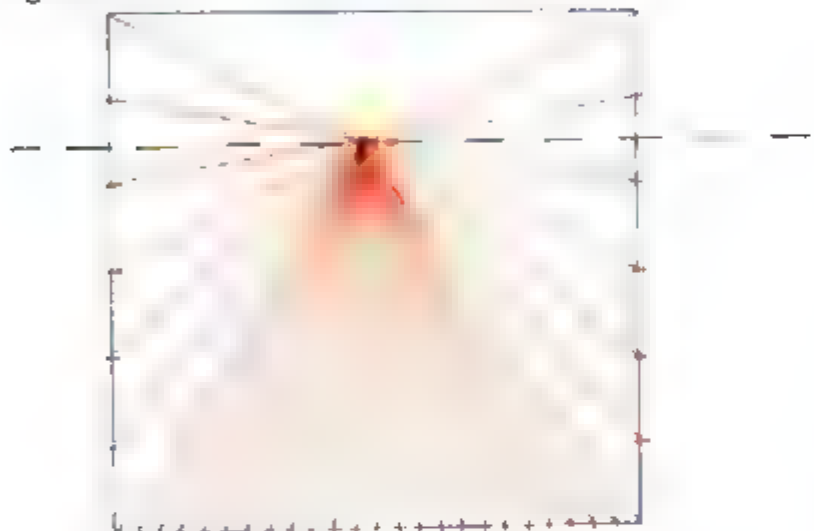
Figure 9B

F g 9B introduces us with to a new step. Last t me we talked about perspective, I showea you a method for doing *equidistant spacing*, which meant keeping the illusion that objects in perspective were the same distance apart. We're going to do that in this drawing, but I'm going to show you a different way to do equidistant spacing. See those little red marks (remember,
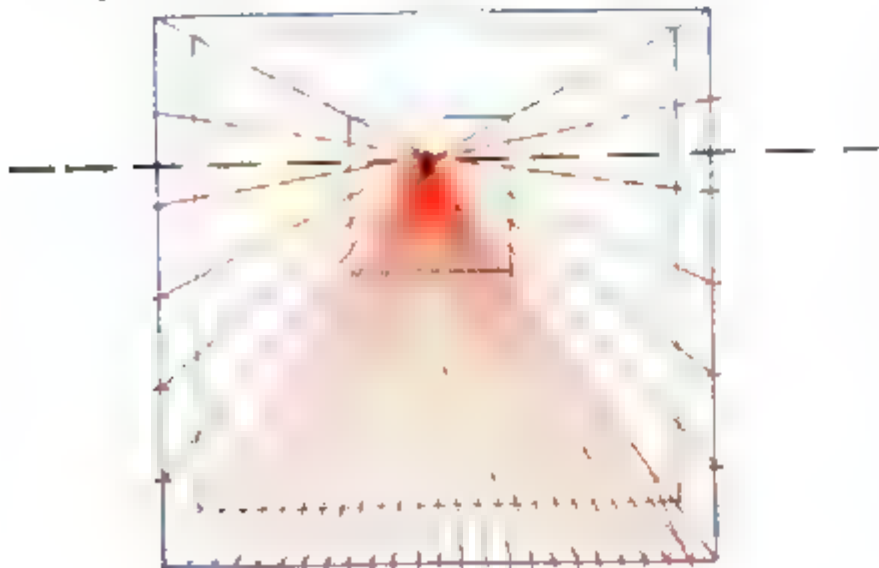
Figure 9C

that blue square is my "piece of paper") along the sides and bottom of my "page"? I used a ruler to measure equal spaces along those three sides. The two vertical sides have the same number of marks and they are right across from each other. The bottom line has more marks that are closer together. I did this because I know I will need to use more lines to make my railroad, and fewer lines for my telephone poles...that may not make sense now, but stick with me.

From the vanishing point I'm going to use my ruler (or straight edge) to draw converging lines to each red mark I've made. See how it looks in F g. 9C. Can you begin to imagine the railroad tracks and telephone poles yet? Let's define this space a little more by establishing the front and back of this cube...pretend we are looking inside a cube, or room.

Figure 9D

Those green squares in F g 9D are going to help us define this space. That big square is the "front" and that smaller square inside is the "back." You can pick anyplace to put those squares, as long as you use your T-square and triangle to keep them parallel to each other. A so, make sure that the corners of both of your squares are on the same converging line. Check mine to see what I mean.

Figure 9E

Get ready.. here comes the *new* equidistant spacing technique...in F g. 9E I've removed some extra lines that I don't think we'll need anymore, and I've addea some new blue lines. These blue lines go from one corner of a square to an opposite corner. Look at the "inside" of our cube, on the "left side" there is a blue line that goes from the top of the back corner to the bottom of the front corner. We need
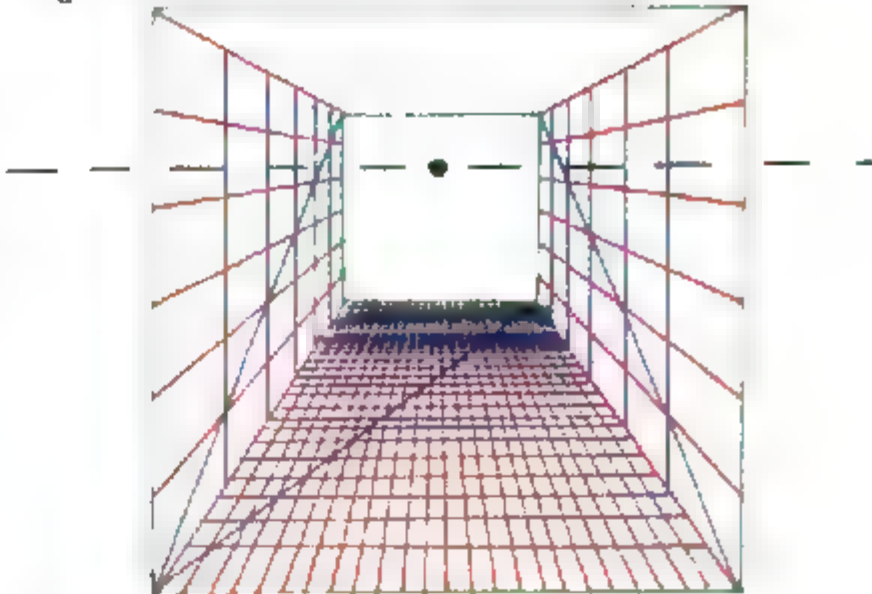
Figure 9F

one of these lines for each side that we will neea equidistant spacing. See where the blue lines intersect the red lines? Those spots are very important to us! I h'ghlighted them in orange in F g 9F. As those spots move closer to the back of the cube, you can see how they get closer together. That is what we want! I know it may not seem like those spots are equidistant, but that's okay, it's part of the illusion of perspective.

Going back to our trusty T-square and triangle, we want to make vertical lines on the sides of our cube. It is important that these vertical lines go right through those intersections we talked about a second ago.
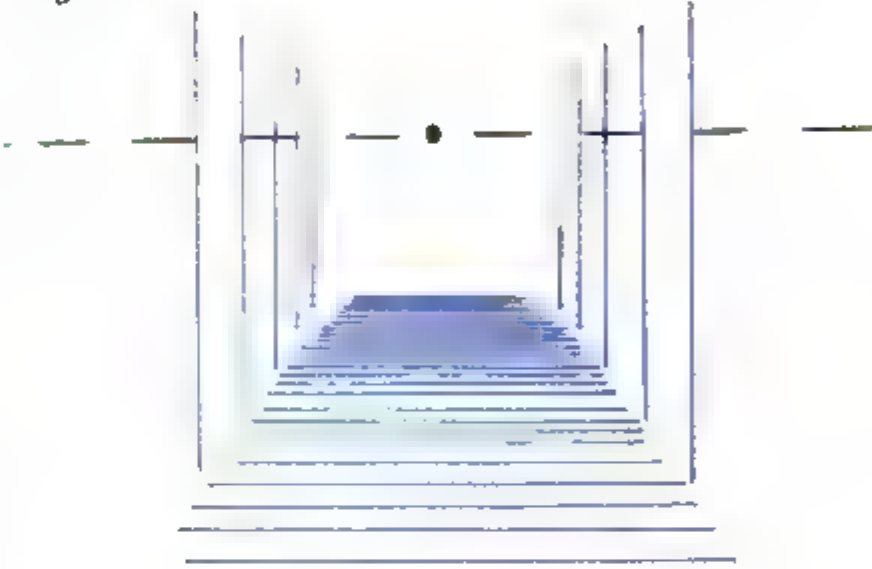
Check out F g. 9G to see what I mean. Now, using just the T-square, make horizontal lines that go across the "floor" of

Figure 9G

our cube. Yes, there are lots more lines! It does get a little crowded and confusing the further back you go, but don't let that worry you! Are you beginning to see that railroad track and those telephone poles more clearly now?
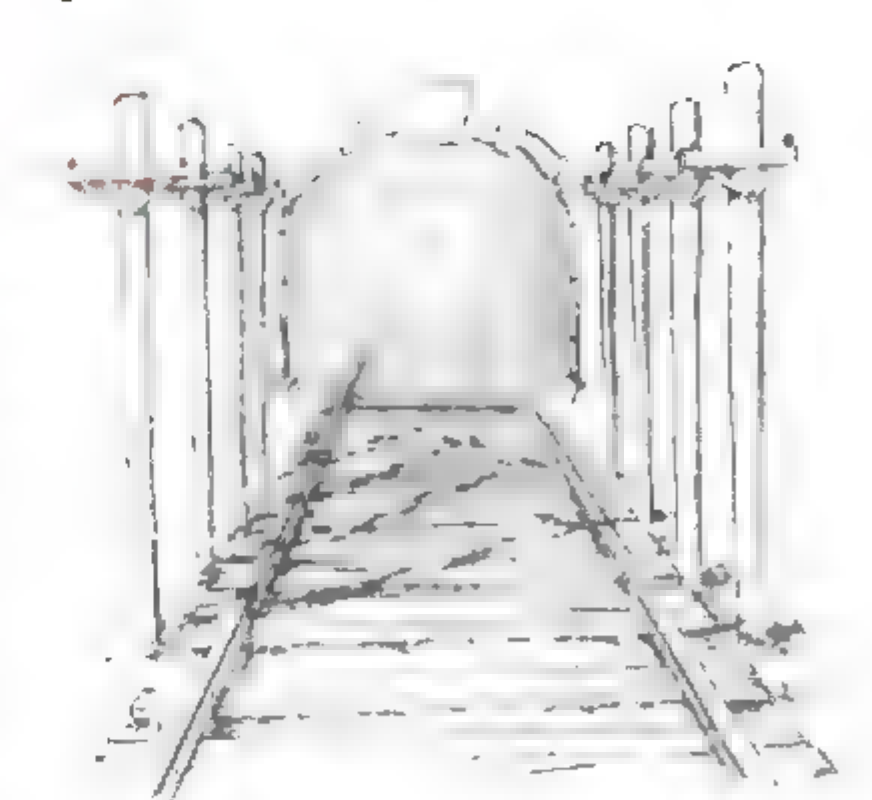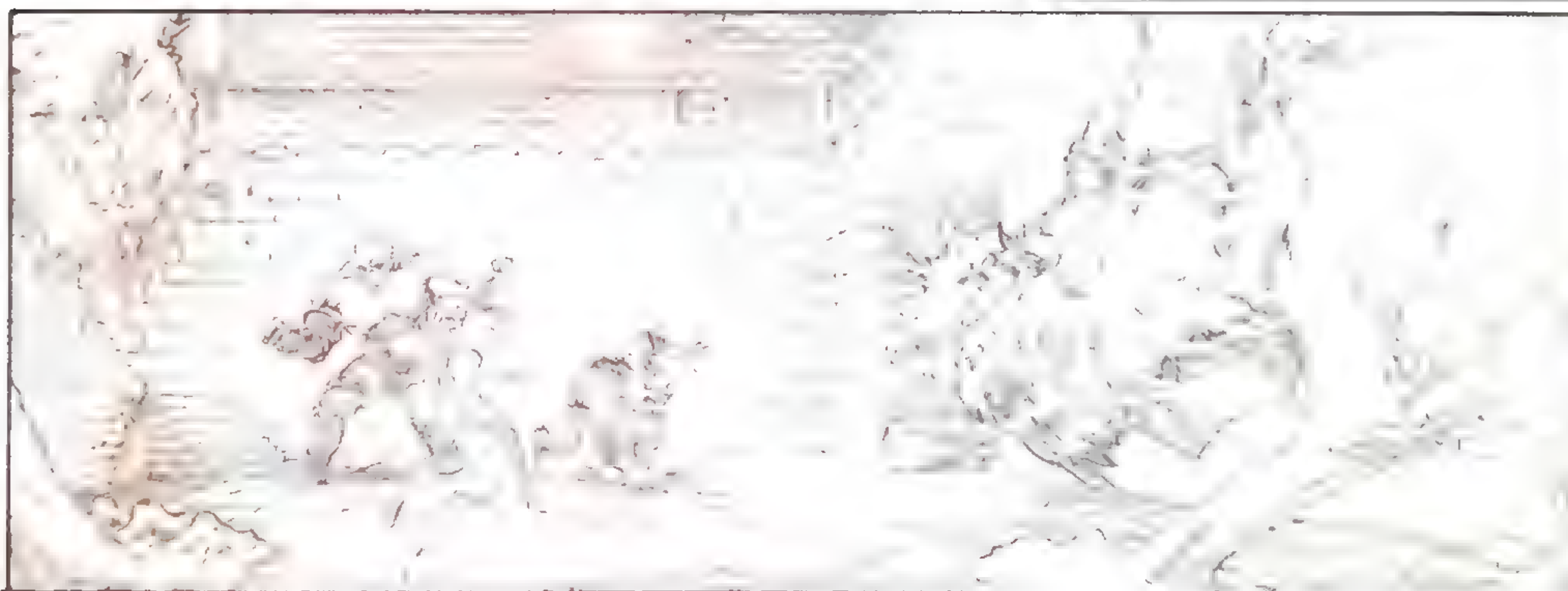
Figure 9H

Take a peek at F g 9H if that helps you imagine it...now, this *is not* a step you should do, I inserted this drawing to help you see how those equidistant lines we just drew work without any of the other lines.

Your last step is to actually do the drawing - you have your perspective al set up, now make it look like something! I made

Figure 9I

my railroad track disappear into a tunnel in F g 9I. Does it look like the tracks and poles are moving away from us? I sure hope so!

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Fig. 10 is another example of one-point perspective at work.
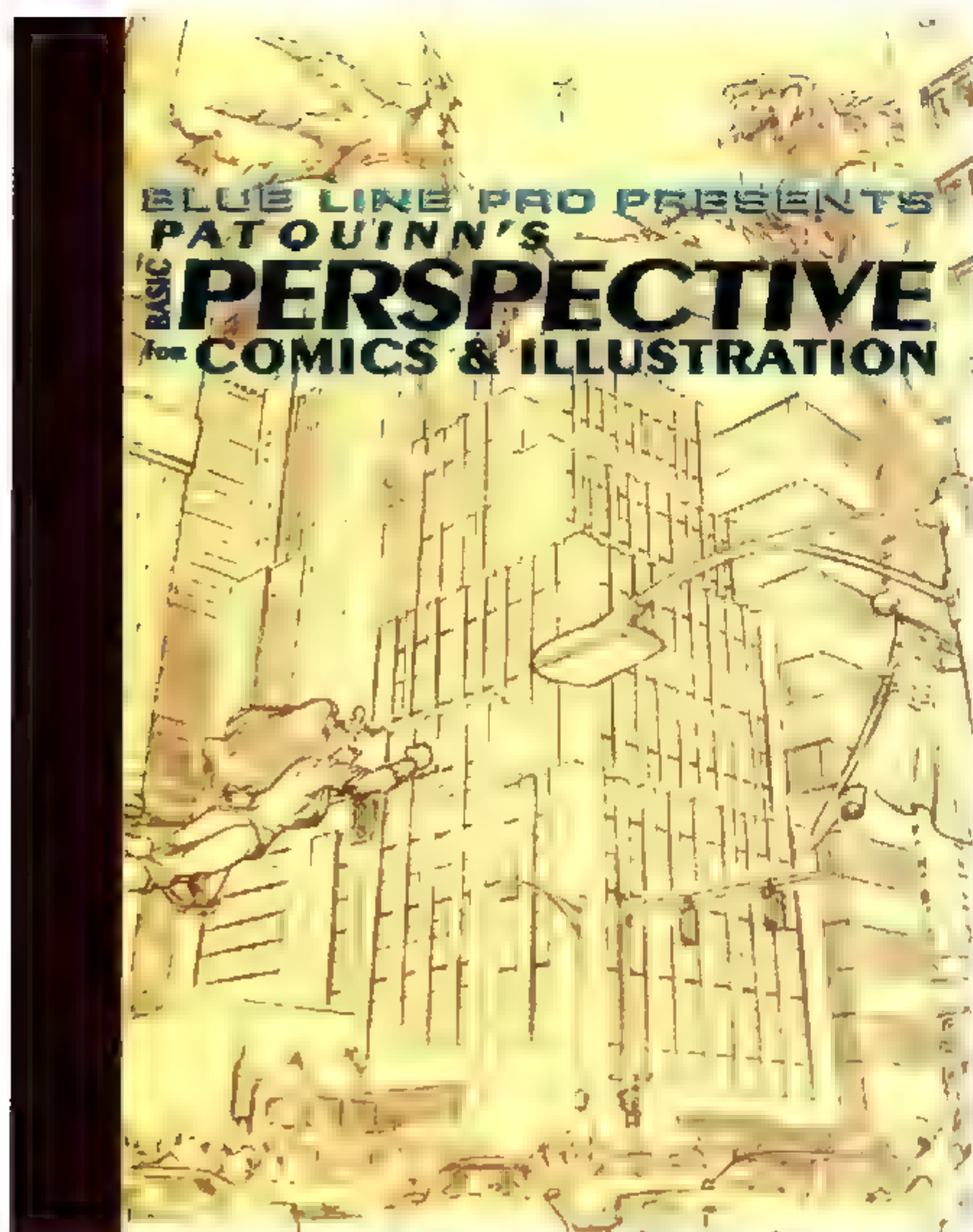See if you can find the horizon line and vanishing point.

AARON HÜBRICH'S

DIGITAL COLORS

Some Background on Backgrounds

Did you ever have a pin-up that you wanted to color, but just didn't have the time or patience to create any simple backgrounds for it right then and there? Well, don't worry about backgrounds when it's too late. Let's do them now, and drop in a pin-up when we want to! It's all about control, and using Photoshop allows us to do just that.

First, let's create a basic background. I'd recommend an area that's pretty large; for example, I created a 20" x 20" area just in case. Make sure you have "pockets" of interesting color going on so your backgrounds don't end up as boring as the original white space. The reason you want to have these large areas is so you can recycle the piece over and over again. It's only a simple mouse click away to change the color, so having variation with one background isn't a problem at all.
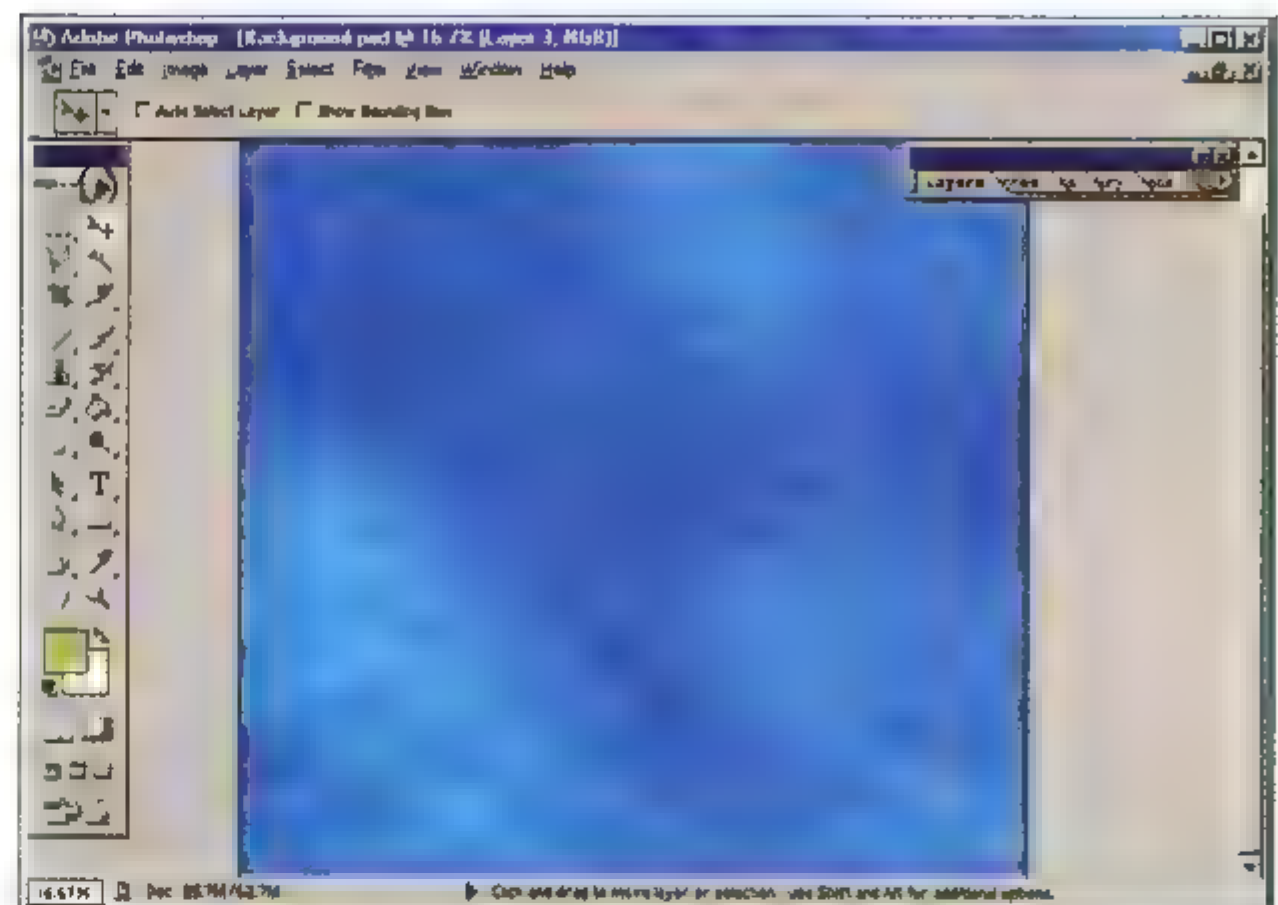
Depending on how many pin-ups you have, it may be in your best interest to create theme backgrounds like a sky, mountain range, ocean, grasslands, etc. Each one could be used multiple times without the viewer even knowing it.

Your pin-up should be colored on a solid colored background (like white), as to make the selection of it a painless process. When you have your pin-up ready to go onto the background, follow these steps: Make sure your background Photoshop file and your pin-up Photoshop files are open. Go to the pin-up file and select the white area surrounding the pin-up with the Magic Wand tool (anti-aliasing off/tolerance, at or around 10). Go to Select/Similar. Now go to Select/Inverse. "Inversing" the selection will only select the pin-up - which is a good thing. Go to Edit/Copy. Immediately go to your background file and make a new layer (if you haven't already). Go to Edit/Paste. Your pin-up should appear on top of the background you created.
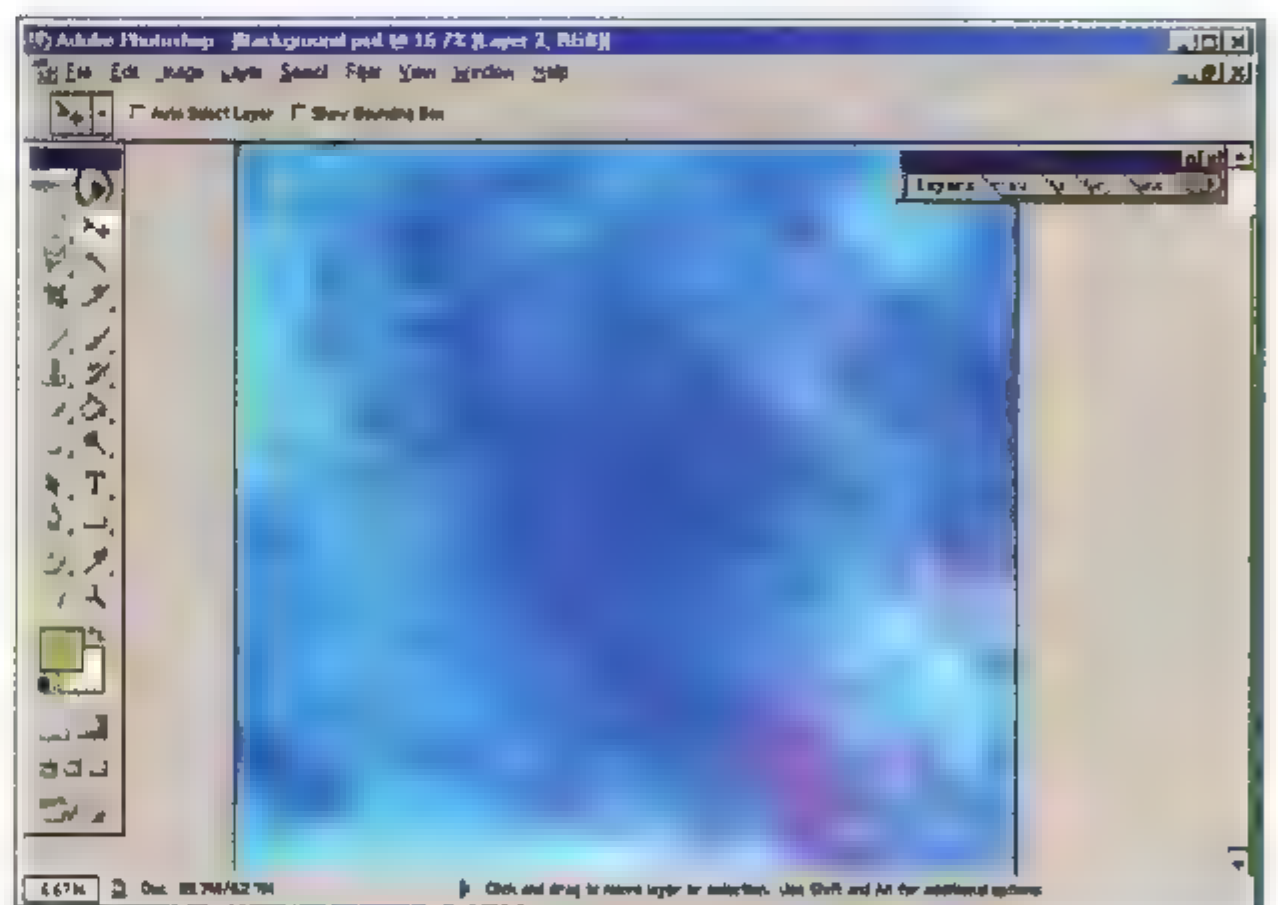
If you see some problems with a halo around the pin-up, go back to your pin-up file and make a better selection, or clean up the edges of your image. You may have to work with the tolerance setting on the magic wand tool. It's also vital that anti-aliasing is turned off, because you don't want a soft edge to your line. Once you have the image fixed and copied onto the background file you're done with the pin-up Photoshop file. Go ahead and close it to save that ram.

With your pin-up in place on your large background, you can now position it in an area that is most appealing with the Move tool. As long as your pin-up is on a separate layer, you'll find it very easy to move it into the exact location you want.
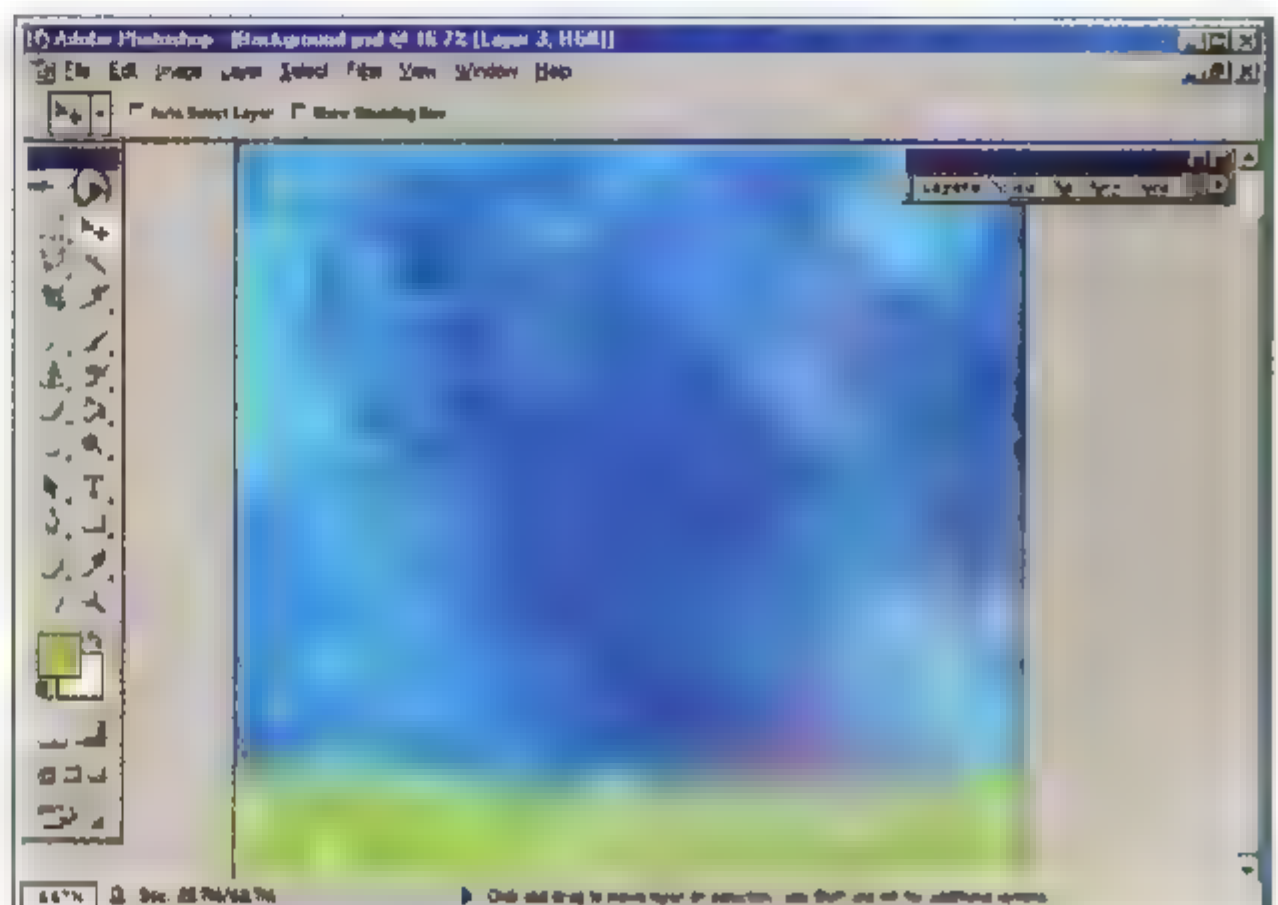
Backgrounds can be fun, especially when they're finished and ready to go. So take advantage of these tips so you spend more time doing those killer pin-ups!
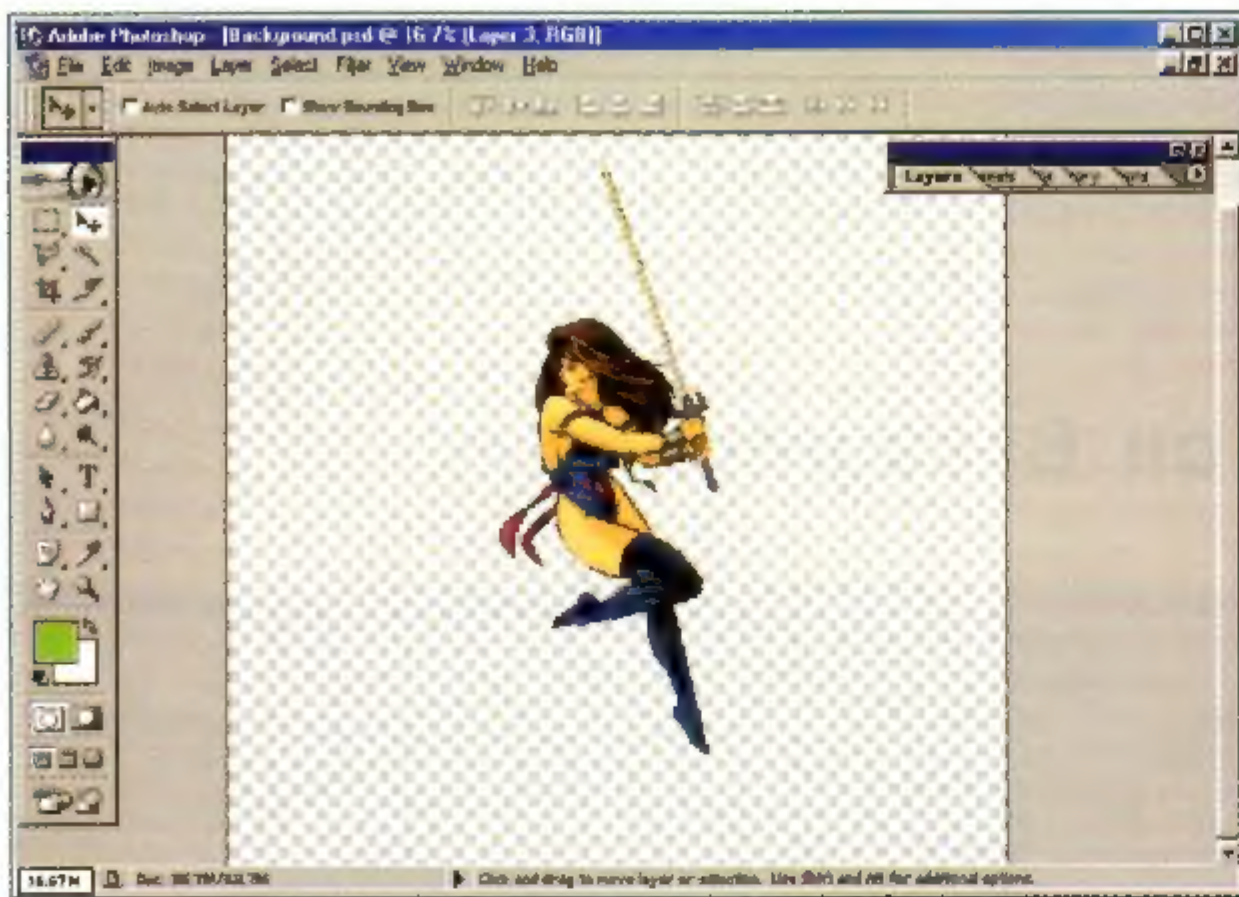

Step 1. Create your base color on the base layer

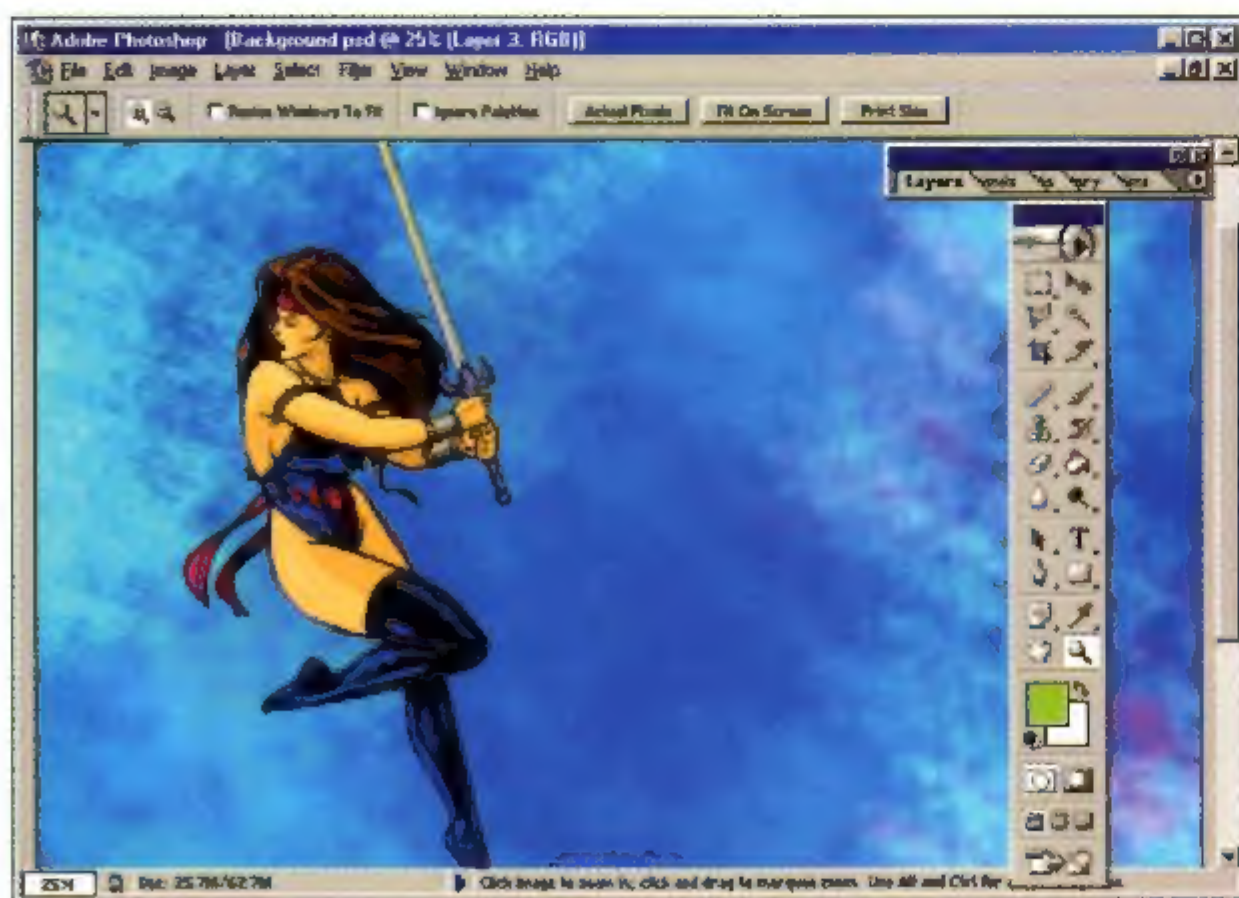Step 2. Ad some texture on a second layer

Step 3. Experiment with Photoshop 7's new brushes, like this "grass brush" on a third layer

Step 4. Make sure your pin-up is ready to be copied and pasted.

6.1
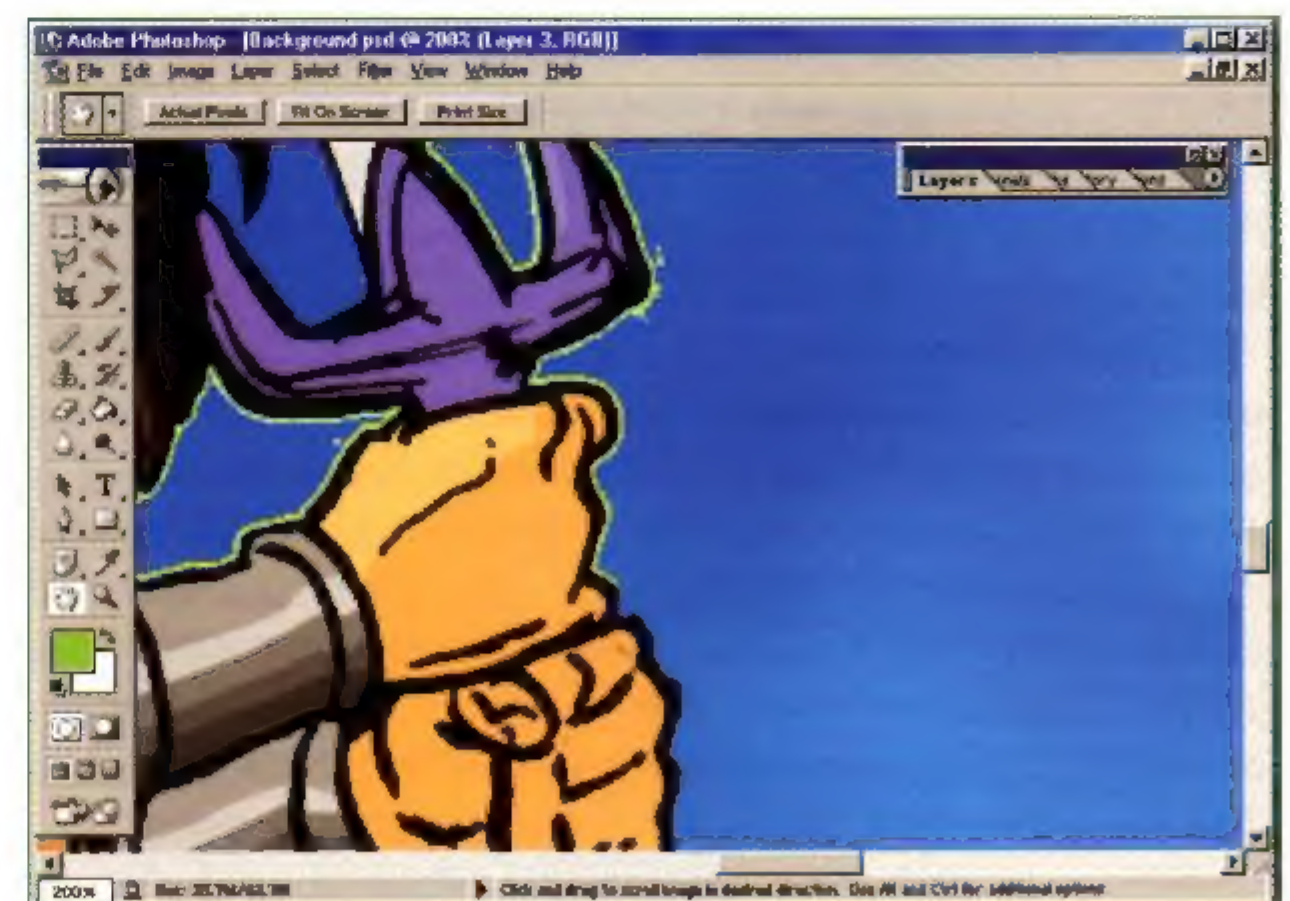

6.2

Step 5. Make a new layer and "paste" your pin-up in.

Step 7. Once you have your pin-up in place, you can adjust the colors how you like them. Make sure all the layers that are your background are merged together so you can adjust them together.

Step 6. Move your pin-up around using your "move" tool

Step 8. Watch for halo effects or rough edges when you paste your pin-up into your nice background. To prevent this, you have to be careful to get rid of any color along the edge of the line and make sure your magic wand tolerances are set correctly.

CONTRIBUTORS

Bob Hickey
Along with his duties as publisher of Sketch Magazine, he is the creative force behind Blood & Roses, StormQuest, and Tempered Steele. He currently has a new Blood and Roses project in the works along with his new creator owned series Race Danger, both will be appearing at BLP Comics.
Bob is one of the co-founders of Blue Line Productions.
He can be reached at bobh@bluelinepro.com
www.bluelinepro.com

Flint Henry
WizKids/Mage Knight, Ral Partha, and other companies utilize the fantastical concepts pulsating from his Nyarlathopean pencil point – icing on the appendage after more than a decade of delineating disturbed, dark, and violent characters such as Grimjack, Lawdog, Manbat, and the occasional demonic Batman.

Chuck Dixon
With the successful launch of Way of the Rat hard on the heels of his commandeering Sigil and Crux, this new transplant becomes a key chronicler at CrossGeneration Comics. He'll continue to bring his respected, popular, and prolific scribing to bear in expanding the excitement of the CrossGen canon!

M² a.k.a. Mike Maydak
M² has now been working for Blue Line Pro for the past four years. In that time, he has learned much from the experienced crew at Sketch about the comic industry and has mastered the technique of "getting lunch". He often contributes in the form of graphic design, writing, and editorial work.

Bill Baker
Bill Baker has established himself as one of the preeminent interviewers in the comics journalism community. After getting his start as a reporter on a now-defunct website, he graduated to doing both long and short form interviews for two of the best known comic book sites on the web, Comic Book Resources and Wizard World. This lead to his articles and interviews appearing in print magazines, including Comic Book Marketplace and Comic Buyers' Guide.

Mitch Byrd
Mitch's pencils have wowed everyone, from the sci-fi super-hero Guy Gardner crowd to the extreme-evisceration indulgers of Verotik comics. Enjoy his attractive, lighthearted art with our Sketch exclusives.

Beau Smith
Beau created and writes Parts Unknown and Primate, currently at Image Comics. He's scripted The Undertaker for Chaos Comics, The Tenth, Wynonna Earp, Spawn: Book Of Souls, Wolverine/Shi, Batman/Wildcat and several Star Wars stories for Dark Horse, as well as the upcoming Xena/Wonder Woman crossover.
See more of Beau at www.flyingfistranch.com

Tom Bierbaum
Tom, with wife Mary, has scripted such comics as Legion of Super-Heroes and The Heckler for DC Comics, Xena and Return to Jurassic Park for Topps Comics, Star for Image Comics and Dead Kid Adventures, a creator owned project by Knight Press.

Aaron Hübrich
Aaron was going to be the next great fantasy painter, but something caught his eye in college - comics! From then on he never looked back, focusing on making an impact on the the comic book industry. In the 90's he learned a lot by self publishing, and working for several larger publishers. A few years ago he became interested in digital coloring, and is now contributing his skills to major publishers.
Aaron has authored a book showing the "step by step" process on how to make comic books come to life using Photoshop. If you were ever interested in how to color for comics, then you really need to check out this book!

Pat Quinn
Pat has drawn comics for several publishers. His work includes Gen 13, Writer's Bloc Annual, Necrotic, and Image Introduces...Cryptopia. Pat has also illustrated several projects for Idea and Design Works, including Bionicle trading cards and the comic adaptation of Origin's Ultima video game, as well as a Green Lantern story for DC Comics.

Mike Dominic
Mike is the creator of the online comic book "The Journals of Simon Pariah" SimonPariah.keenspace.com, as well as a freelance illustrator, colorist, and commercial artist. He has been drawing comics since he could hold a pencil, but has been specializing in internet comics for the past three years.
Mike is mostly self-taught, both as a comic artist and a computer "expert". He has done guest appearances, both as artist and character, in several online comic strips, and has worked on everything from newsletter covers to tattoo designs. He has a whole host of work that he plans to eventually unleash upon an unsuspecting world.
In addition to his day job and his comics work, Mike is a sometimes computer consultant, a database designer, and an avid "propellorhead" when it comes to the Internet.
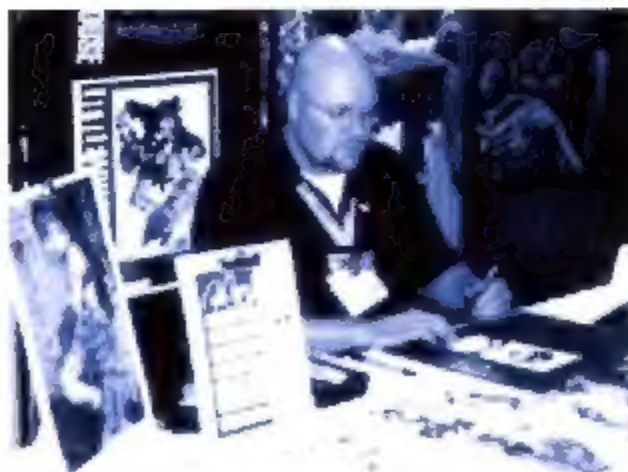He has occasionally been known to sleep.

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Early Guest List:
Frank Cho
Liberty Meadows
David Mack
Kabuki

Beau Smith
Star Wars - Parts Unknown
Jan Duursema
Star Wars
David Beck
G.I. Joe - Lady Death
Andy Lee
kabuki
Mitch Byrd
Blood & Roses - Guy Gardner
Pat Quinn
Cryptopia - Parts Unknown

Paul Sizer
Little White Mouse
Dan Davis
Animated Batman
Andy Kuhn
Firebreather
Josh Blaylock
G.I. Joe
Scott Kurtz
PVP
Aaron Hubrich
Digital Colors for Comics
and many more...

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